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# **Longitudinal study of local authority child and family social workers (Wave 2)**

**Research report**

**July 2020**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction and background

In 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned a consortium led by IFF Research, working with social work academics at Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford, to conduct a longitudinal study tracking the careers of local authority child and family social workers in England over five years. The landmark new study aimed to collect robust evidence on recruitment, retention and progression in child and family social work by tracking individuals over a five-year period.

In Wave 1, 5,621 local authority child and family social workers took part in the survey, comprising almost one in six of the population.<sup>1</sup> This report covers the second year of the research, which involved a number of elements:

- Wave 2 of the longitudinal survey, conducted between September 2019 and January 2020, before the coronavirus pandemic hit the UK. In total, 3,302 of those who completed the Wave 1 survey and agreed to be re-contacted took part in Wave 2: a response rate of 72%. The report demonstrates how the circumstances and experiences of the cohort have changed between the two surveys, rather than providing a representative 'snapshot' of the entire child and family social work profession at the time of the Wave 2 survey. Wave 2 participants are similar demographically to Wave 1 and to the original population profile. However, social workers who did not respond to the Wave 2 survey tended to have been slightly less positive about job satisfaction and more likely to say they planned to leave the profession at Wave 1.
- Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) survey: this consisted of 256 newly qualified social workers doing their ASYE, who started this role between October 2018 and June 2019. As the 'main' sample has moved on by a year and is no longer a representative snapshot of the profession, given that ASYE social workers have mainly moved into front line practitioner roles, there is a need for an annual boost sample of ASYEs.
- 40 follow-up qualitative telephone interviews split evenly between Wave 2 'stayers' (who planned to stay in local authority child and family social work over the next 12 months), and 'leavers' (those who had left the profession at Wave 2).

The report identifies areas where the Wave 1 and Wave 2 findings are consistent or different: only statistically significant differences (at the 95% confidence interval) are

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<sup>1</sup> DfE, Longitudinal Study of Child and Family Social Workers – Wave 1:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/longitudinal-study-of-local-authority-social-workers>

highlighted. The report also identifies statistically significant differences between sub-groups, within Wave 2.

### **How many are still working in local authority child and family social work?**

**The vast majority of respondents (94%) were still employed in local authority child and family social work in Wave 2**, and among this group nine in ten (89%) were still working at the same local authority (nine per cent via an agency) while one in ten (10%) had moved jobs to a different local authority (six per cent working via an agency). Relocation factors were the biggest single reason for moving to a different local authority. One in six (16%) local authority child and family social workers had been promoted between Wave 1 and 2.

**Only a small minority of the sample (five per cent) had left local authority child and family social work between Wave 1 and Wave 2.** Half of those who had left were still employed in social work (either in child and family social work in the private or voluntary sector, or in another area of social work).

**Overall, two per cent had moved from direct employment with a local authority to agency or self-employment between Wave 1 and Wave 2.** Pay was the largest main motivation for moving to agency work.

### **Workplace well-being**

**Working longer than contracted hours is prevalent: three-quarters (75%) reported working more than their contracted hours either ‘all the time’ or ‘most weeks’.** As in Wave 1, the mean number of contracted hours per week was 35, whereas the mean number of hours actually worked was 42. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents spent time in a typical week directly working with children, families or carers. Among this group, the mean number of hours spent directly working with children, families or carers was 10.3.

**The mean number of cases among case holders was 18.8 (consistent with the mean of 19.2 reported at Wave 1).** The number of cases varied by hours worked, with full-time social workers holding 19.8 cases on average compared with 15.3 for part-time social workers. More than one-third (38%) of social workers in case holding roles were allocated more than 20 cases.

**Workplace well-being is of growing concern for social workers.** There has been an increase since Wave 1 in the proportion of local authority child and family social workers who felt:

- stressed by their job (56%, up from 51%);
- that they are asked to fulfil too many roles in their job (55% up from 47%); and
- that their overall workload is too high (54%, up from 51%).

One-quarter of social workers who reported that they did not feel stressed by their job at Wave 1 now felt stressed, and they were more likely to be front line practitioners and working in Children in Need or Child Protection teams. Three-quarters of those who felt stressed at Wave 1 also felt stressed at Wave 2.

### **Social workers' views of their employer, line manager and working environment**

**A higher proportion of respondents at Wave 2 than at Wave 1 felt loyal to their employer** (75%, up from 71% in Wave 1) and felt valued (59%, up from 54% in Wave 1). However, if only those who took part in both survey waves are compared, there was no change. This shows that those who only completed in Wave 1 had more negative views about their relationship with their employer.

**Respondents' views on different aspects of line management were typically positive (and little changed from Wave 1).** Agreement was particularly high for feeling that managers were open to ideas (82% agreed) and recognised a job well done (81% agreed). Social workers were less positive about their work environment and tools at their disposal than they were about their employer and their line manager (with the findings very consistent with Wave 1).

**At Wave 2, respondents were receiving less frequent reflective supervision than in Wave 1, which reflects changes in the cohort as they become more experienced over time.** In Wave 2, almost one-quarter of social workers received reflective supervision less often than every six weeks (23% in Wave 2 compared with 17% in Wave 1) or reported they had never received it at their current employer (12% in Wave 2, up from nine per cent in Wave 1). This is primarily driven by those who were on their ASYE in Wave 1 moving into roles (predominantly front line practitioner roles) where reflective supervision became less frequent. At the same time the proportion providing reflective supervision has increased between waves (from 25% to 27%), reflecting the increase in the number of those in senior positions.

**The vast majority (89%) of social workers at Wave 2 had undertaken some employer-supported learning or CPD within the 12 months' prior to being surveyed,** while seven in ten (69%) agreed that they are able to access the right learning and development opportunities.

### **Job satisfaction**

**Most social workers (73%) at Wave 2 found their job satisfying.** Although this was consistent with the proportion at Wave 1 overall (74%), among those working as child and family social workers who took part at both waves, the proportion who were satisfied had decreased (from 78% in Wave 1, to the 73% in Wave 2). Front line practitioners were less satisfied with their job overall than those in more senior roles (67%, compared to 89% of senior service managers, and 80% of team managers).

**There were some changes in satisfaction with specific aspects of the job, wave on wave.** Satisfaction with some aspects decreased, such as the sense of achievement people get from their work (79% in Wave 2 compared with 85% in Wave 1). However, satisfaction increased for more practical factors such as pay (58% in Wave 2 compared with 51% in Wave 1) and job security (81% in Wave 2 compared with 78% in Wave 1).

### Short-term career plans

**Most of those still working in local authority child and family social work plan to stay there over the next 12 months.** Of all those currently working in local authority child and family social work, including agency workers, almost three-quarters (72%) anticipated remaining in the profession and being directly employed by a local authority in 12 months' time. One in nine (11%) expected to be in the profession but employed through an agency (the majority of whom were already employed in agency work) and one in twenty (5%) expected to be working outside of social work altogether.

**Many of those who were not in local authority child and family social work at Wave 2 thought that they might return to social work within 12 months.** Four in ten (40%) thought they would be back in child and family social work (13% directly employed by a local authority, nine per cent by an agency and 18% in the private/voluntary sector), while another 20% thought that they would return to another type of social work. One in five (18%) expected to be working outside of social work altogether in 12 months' time.

**For those who were considering leaving child and family social work in the next 12 months, the most commonly cited reason was retirement (20%).** Dislike of the culture of local authority child and family social work (14%) and factors related to hours and aspects of the workload such as paperwork and caseload (15%) were also relatively common, as were personal reasons (12%).

### Reasons for leaving child and family social work

**Only a small proportion (five per cent) of those who completed Wave 2 had left local authority child and family social work between waves.** This comprised:

- Two per cent who had left child and family social work for another social work role, most commonly attributing the change to **high caseloads** in child and family social work.
- Three per cent who had left social work altogether. The key reasons among this group were that **'it was just not the right type of job for me'** and **'I am taking a career break'**. Nearly half of leavers were still working in the health and social care sector, in a non-social work role.

Two-thirds (64%) of leavers said they were not likely to return to child and family social work in the next five years while a third (34%) said that they were likely to return, rising to 43% among those with childcare responsibilities.



## ASYE entrants

The profile of new ASYE entrants at Wave 2 was very similar to ASYEs at Wave 1, with few demographic differences.

**Four in five (81%) ASYE social workers in Wave 2 reported feeling well prepared for a career in child and family social work, consistent with ASYEs in Wave 1**

**Almost half (49%) of ASYE social workers worked for 41 hours or more in a typical week, despite none being contracted to work more than 40 hours.** The mean caseload for ASYEs was 16, consistent with Wave 1 (17), and lower than other social workers, reflecting the expectation that ASYEs have a protected caseload.

Two-fifths (40%) of new ASYEs agreed that 'my overall workload is too high', almost half (48%) agreed that 'I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job' (significantly higher than the 38% in Wave 1), and nearly two-thirds (63%) agreed that 'I feel stressed in my job'. When asked what was causing this stress, the most frequently mentioned factors were too much paperwork (72%), too little time to work directly with children and families (60%), and too few resources to support families (51%). When asked for the single main reason, too much paperwork (27%) and too high a caseload (14%) were the most commonly mentioned.

**Despite overtime working and high levels of self-reported stress, at least two-thirds of ASYE social workers were satisfied with each aspect of their day-to-day job.** Two-thirds (68%) were satisfied with the job overall, less than ASYEs in Wave 1 (75%).

**Reflecting this, the majority (79%) of Wave 2 ASYE social workers planned to be working directly in local authority child and family social work in 12 months' time,** with seven per cent planning to be working in a different area of social work, four per cent working via an agency, four per cent working outside of social work altogether, and three per cent working in child and family social work in the private or voluntary sector.

## Conclusions

Wave 2 of the study has revealed that the majority of child and family social workers plan to stay in the profession: most are satisfied with their jobs and with the opportunities they have for learning and development. Future waves of the study will explore the factors influencing job retention and career development over time.

The key drivers of satisfaction among front line practitioners include feeling proud to work in child and family social work, having positive relationships with line managers, and feeling valued by their employers. Conversely, factors such as feelings of stress and having too high a workload had a negative impact on job satisfaction. These are all

factors that can be influenced by positive workplace culture and good quality line management.

The qualitative follow-up interviews revealed further depth on the reasons for leaving child and family social work and highlighted the variability and highly personal nature of people's decisions. However, there was definitely a sense that workload, stress and 'burnout' were deep-seated and recurrent issues among the small proportion of people who decided to leave. These could be exacerbated by unsupportive line managers, oppressive working cultures, inadequate IT, and overly bureaucratic systems. On the other hand, they could be alleviated by a range of support factors, including: better quality reflective supervision; time and support for professional development; access to flexible working arrangements and supportive IT; and senior managers who were visible, approachable and seen to take a genuine interest in their staff.

# 1. Introduction

In 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned a consortium led by IFF Research, working with social work academics at Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford, to conduct a landmark new longitudinal study tracking the careers of a cohort of individual local authority child and family social workers over five years. The study therefore provides a unique opportunity to explore not only changes over time at aggregate level, but how individuals' career paths and attitudes may change, and what influences these, over time.

This report covers the second year (Wave 2) of the survey and follow-up qualitative research. It sets out social workers' current employment situations and their views on a range of issues including job satisfaction and career progression, and career plans for the next 12 months. Findings from Wave 2 of the survey are compared to Wave 1 findings throughout this report. There is also some early longitudinal analysis which looks at changes among individuals across the two waves. In addition, this second wave of research provides insight into those who have left child and family social work since they completed the Wave 1 survey; the report details their destinations after child and family social work and their current job satisfaction, reasons for leaving and likelihood of returning to the profession in the future.

In this chapter we set out the background to this research, including developments in the policy context, and summarise its aims and objectives. We then provide an outline of the methodology for Wave 2 of the study, before discussing the structure of the report.

## Background

The latest Department for Education (DfE) child and family social work workforce data<sup>2</sup> shows there were 32,920 child and family social workers employed by local authorities (LAs) at 30 September 2019, of whom 29% were aged 50 or over, suggesting high levels of upcoming replacement demand. Agency workers made up 16% of the workforce, slightly higher than in September 2018 (15%). The staff turnover rate was 16% (based on headcount), consistent with the previous year. The number of reported vacancies was 6,040 (full-time equivalents), slightly more than the previous year (5,810). The national vacancy rate of 16% (based on full-time equivalents) remained stable, but there were large regional variations. The DfE workforce statistics<sup>3</sup> indicate that 68% (FTE) of

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<sup>2</sup> [DfE Children's Social Work Workforce Data 2019](#)

<sup>3</sup> [DfE Children's Social Work Workforce Data 2019](#)

children and family social workers leaving within the reference year had been in service in their local authority for less than five years (up from 63% the previous year).

Evaluations of the Newly Qualified Social Worker and Early Professional Development pilot schemes, which developed into the current Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), suggest that targeted programmes to support new workers may help to boost retention (Carpenter et al, 2012; Blewett et al 2013). However, there is currently a lack of longitudinal robust and reliable evidence on recruitment, retention and progression among child and family social workers. The DfE workforce statistics data presents experimental data, with some potential for future longitudinal analysis but does not capture the views of social workers, or the reasons underpinning the data.

In 2013 Baginsky (2013) stated that poor retention in social work results in a workforce with insufficient numbers of experienced staff capable of dealing with the complexity of the work, and of providing appropriate leadership and support to less experienced colleagues. High staff turnover affects the quality of service provision; may affect public confidence; limits opportunities for individual and organisational learning; and offers a low return on investment in social work education (RiP, 2015).

During qualifying education social work students build upon their initial commitment to the profession (Collins, 2016). Professional commitment is one factor said to predict intention to leave a role, along with organisational commitment, burnout and job satisfaction, (Mor Barak, Nissly & Levin, 2001), and consequently social work education has an important role in laying strong foundations for students' futures in the profession.

Since 2007 there have been a series of reforms in social work education and training, intended to improve the quality of recruitment, to better prepare students for social work practice and improve retention. Giving students a more 'realistic' view of what social work practice will be like has been highlighted as a possible way of improving retention (Webb & Carpenter, 2012), with implications for the engagement of employers in social work education (McLaughlin, Shardlow et al. 2010). Two postgraduate accelerated routes have been introduced in child and family social work - Step Up to Social Work, in 2010, and Frontline, in 2013. While early evaluations of Step Up and Frontline are generally positive (Maxwell, Scourfield et al 2016), these programmes have not been running for long enough to determine their longer term effects. Findings from a longitudinal study of Step Up to Social Work found that 85% of Cohort 1 graduates were still practising in child and family social work three years after qualifying and 73% five years after (Smith et al, 2018).

The Social Work Reform Board (2010, 2012) recommended a new professional capabilities framework that would be useable at all levels from student to senior practitioner. This has evolved into Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) for both adult and child and family social workers, designed to provide post-qualification specialist career pathways and act as the foundation for Continuing Professional Development

(CPD) and performance appraisal. For front line social workers and their practice supervisors, these statements act as the post-qualifying professional improvement standards set out under Section 42 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS) for child and family social workers has been rolled out in phase 1 and 2 local authorities, and is still in its early stages. This is a voluntary three-stage assessment process (incorporating the KSS) designed to create a national standard of practice, support social workers gain a better understanding of their practice, and help employers to review how they support social workers. In March 2020 NAAS was running in 69 local authority and trust sites with over 1,600 assessments undertaken. The sample within this study is therefore not representative of the full NAAS social worker population, as it includes social workers from some local authorities where NAAS is not operational.

The other key development in social work since the publication of the Wave 1 report in August 2019 has been the creation of Social Work England, which was established under The Children and Social Work Act 2017 to take responsibility as the new specialist regulator for social workers in England from the previous regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Social Work England took over from the HCPC in December 2019. Alongside its registration and regulatory functions, it is responsible for assuring the quality of social work education and ensuring social workers keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

## **Aims and objectives**

The aim of this landmark longitudinal study is to collect robust evidence on recruitment, retention and progression in child and family social work. In particular it aims to establish a much stronger understanding of recruitment issues, career pathways, choices and decisions and how these differ according to demographics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity), different entry routes, roles and responsibilities, region, LA performance and local labour markets.

Within this, the specific study objectives are to:

- explore what attracted respondents to child and family social work and how they feel their training path (and ASYE) have prepared them for this career;
- investigate career aspirations, change over time and between different roles;
- distinguish how the experience of performance management, CPD (and, in the longer-term, Knowledge and Skills Statements) affect retention and progression;
- identify specific issues facing particular groups (e.g. people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, those with caring responsibilities, returners);

- explore whether these issues are similar across different roles and practice areas within children's services;
- understand pull and push factors that influence social workers remaining in post, moving within children's services or leaving the profession; and
- find out where social workers go when they leave and why.

For the purposes of the study, a child and family social worker is defined as a qualified social worker registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or Social Work England, working in a local authority or Children's Trust<sup>4</sup>, in a children's services department or (if working in an authority where the services are joined up) a social worker that works exclusively on children and families work. This includes social workers regardless of their position in the organisation, i.e. at all levels of seniority and in all relevant areas of practice. Agency social workers employed in local authorities and social workers on secondment to Regional Adoption Agencies are also included within the scope of the research.

## Methodology

Wave 2 of the study comprised two components:

1. A longitudinal mixed-methods online and telephone survey of child and family social workers, to be conducted across five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23. The second wave of the survey, conducted between September 2019 and January 2020, comprised two surveys:
  - Wave 2 longitudinal survey: all respondents who completed the Wave 1 survey and consented to be recontacted for the next wave were invited to complete this survey, where contact details were held. People were still eligible to complete the survey if they had moved job or employer or were no longer working in social work. This survey allows the experiences of the cohort to be tracked as they move through their careers. This means that changes observed between waves may be attributable to career movement and changes to career plans and therefore are not intended to reflect the current state of the child and family social workforce at the time.
  - ASYE survey: this survey consisted of social workers doing their ASYE, who started in this role between October 2018 and June 2019. This window

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<sup>4</sup> Where we refer to local authorities in the remainder of this report this includes Children's Trusts.

was specified to avoid picking up ASYE social workers who had already completed Wave 1 of the survey.

2. At the end of the Wave 2 survey fieldwork, 40 follow-up qualitative telephone interviews with a mixture of 'stayers' (defined as those who indicated that they planned to stay in local authority child and family social work over the next 12 months) and 'leavers' (those who had left the sector) were conducted. The sample for the qualitative interviews was structured into four groups of 10 interviews each, according to whether social workers had planned to stay in or leave the profession at Wave 1, and whether they had actually done so at Wave 2. This formed four sub-samples for analysis of the factors that lay behind people's decisions, as follows:

- said they were going to stay and stayed;
- said they were going to leave and stayed;
- said they were going to stay and left; and
- said they were going to leave and left.

In order to build the original starting sample of local authority child and family social workers, in summer 2018, prior to the first wave of the survey, IFF wrote to Directors of Children's Services in all 152 local authorities / Children's Trusts in England to invite them to take part in the research. Ninety-five agreed to participate in the study. This accounted for approximately two-thirds of all local authorities / Trusts in England, providing a good spread by region and Ofsted rating (see Tables 1.2 and 1.3 for a detailed breakdown).

Local authorities took part either by providing a census of their in-scope staff work email addresses, and in some cases work telephone numbers (via a secure transfer site), or by sending out an open link to their in-scope staff on our behalf. Where sample was provided direct to IFF it was possible to send an individualised survey link, targeted reminders, and (where a work phone number was provided) to conduct a final top-up survey using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Where the survey was conducted using an open link, the relevant local authorities were asked to send out reminders to staff, but these could not be targeted at non-responders and therefore were less frequent. Respondents to the Wave 2 survey comprised social workers who were recruited through this method, who completed the Wave 1 survey and consented to being contacted to take part in the Wave 2 survey. These respondents received a similar, but shorter survey to the one completed in Wave 1. Questions about current situation, experiences and career plans were repeated in Wave 2, but other questions, such as entry routes into the profession, were removed as there was no need to ask these again.

To ensure that the study continues to represent new entrants to the profession, a supplementary sample of social workers doing their ASYE was collected in Wave 2. The same exercise will be repeated in subsequent waves. A similar sample-building exercise as the one conducted for Wave 1 of the main sample was carried out to build a sample of

local authority ASYE social workers, who received a survey very similar to the Wave 1 questionnaire.

The sample outcomes and response rates for Wave 2, and for the ASYE supplementary survey, are shown in the tables overleaf. The overall response rate for the Wave 2 follow-up survey was 72% of Wave 1 respondents who agreed to be recontacted, across both online and telephone modes. For the ASYE survey, the response rate for sampled contacts was 25%. It is not possible to calculate the response rate for respondents who completed through the open link as not all local authorities provided ASYE population data. The response rate and recontact rates across both waves of the survey are displayed in Table 1.1 below.

More detailed information on the methodology is contained within the technical annex.

**Table 1.1 Response rates and recontact rates, Wave 1 and Wave 2**

	Wave 1	Wave 2
Starting sample	21,000	4,597
Online (n)	4,177	1,701
Online response rate (RR)	20%	40%
Telephone top-up	1,411	1,601
<b>Total response</b>	<b>5,588</b>	<b>3,302</b>
% agreeing to recontact	82%	95%
Overall RR (as % of starting sample)	27%	72%



**Table 1.2 Responses by local authority region and Ofsted rating – Wave 2 survey**

		Online <i>[valid emails provided]</i> n	Online <i>[valid emails provided]</i> %	Telephone <i>[approached via telephone]</i> n	Telephone <i>[approached via telephone]</i> %	Total response <i>[Online and telephone]</i> n	Total response <i>[Online and telephone]</i> %
<b>Overall</b>		<b>1,701</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>1,601</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>3,302</b>	<b>72%</b>
Region	North East	130	35%	131	53%	261	70%
	North West	155	38%	119	47%	274	67%
	Yorkshire and the Humber	110	39%	86	61%	196	68%
	East Midlands	184	34%	219	61%	403	74%
	West Midlands	153	38%	120	54%	273	68%
	East of England	235	40%	197	59%	432	72%
	South East	304	40%	268	61%	572	75%
	South West	142	42%	122	61%	264	77%
	Greater London	288	33%	339	61%	627	71%
Ofsted	Outstanding	262	36%	268	62%	530	72%
	Good	714	36%	709	58%	1,423	71%
	Requires improvement	528	40%	419	54%	947	71%
	Inadequate	197	37%	205	65%	402	76%

**Table 1.3 Response by local authority region and Ofsted rating – ASYE survey**

<b>Overall</b>		<b>Sampled responses: Online</b>	<b>Sampled responses Online</b>	<b>Sampled responses Telephone</b>	<b>Sampled responses Telephone</b>	<b>Total sampled response</b>	<b>Total sampled response</b>	<b>Open-link responses</b>	<b>Sampled &amp; open link TOTAL</b>
		<i>[valid emails provided] n</i>	<i>[valid emails provided] %</i>	<i>[approached via telephone] N</i>	<i>[approached via telephone] %</i>	<i>[Online and telephone] n</i>	<i>[as % of starting sample]</i>	Online	<b>Total ASYE responses</b>
		<b>113</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>261</b>
<b>Region</b>	North East	9	14%	5	10%	14	21%	7	<b>21</b>
	North West	13	25%	5	13%	18	34%	20	<b>38</b>
	Yorkshire and the Humber	11	22%	1	8%	12	24%	12	<b>24</b>
	East Midlands	10	13%	3	5%	13	17%	0	<b>13</b>
	West Midlands	13	14%	7	9%	20	21%	6	<b>26</b>
	East of England	15	16%	8	11%	23	24%	12	<b>35</b>
	South East	3	21%	0	0%	3	21%	17	<b>20</b>
	South West	13	33%	5	21%	18	45%	7	<b>25</b>
	Greater London	26	14%	20	17%	46	25%	13	<b>59</b>
<b>Ofsted</b>	Outstanding	10	23%	5	16%	15	35%	28	<b>43</b>
	Good	55	17%	26	13%	81	25%	29	<b>110</b>
	Requires improvement	40	14%	20	9%	60	22%	29	<b>89</b>
	Inadequate	8	35%	3	21%	11	48%	8	<b>19</b>

## Sample characteristics and weighting

The profile of the Wave 2 participants was largely in line with Wave 1, which in turn was similar to the population statistics in the DfE workforce data collection. Table A.11 in the technical annex gives a full breakdown of achieved sample in Wave 2 compared with 2018 population statistics. As in Wave 1, it was weighted to correct for minor differences in whether or not the social worker was directly employed by their local authority or employed through an agency and by region.

While there was some variation in Ofsted rating between the achieved profile and the population figures, weighting was not applied by Ofsted rating as this is a fluid, often changing measure.

## Wave 2 non-responders

Of the 5,621 respondents who completed the Wave 1 survey, 2,319 did not complete the Wave 2 survey, which equates to 41% of Wave 1 completes. Table 1.4 below shows how these 2,319 non-responders break down:

- Did not consent to recontact at Wave 2 (1,026);
- Were sent but did not engage with the Wave 2 survey (369);
- Started but did not complete the Wave 2 survey, and (831);
- Refused to take part in the Wave 2 survey (93).

**Table 1.4: Breakdown of responders and Wave 2 non-responders**

	<b>Respondents (n)</b>	<b>Respondents as % of Wave 1 achieved sample</b>
<b>Wave 1 complete</b>	5,621	100%
<b>Wave 2 complete</b>	3,302	59%
<b>Wave 2 non-responder (took part in Wave 1, did not take part in Wave 2)</b>	2,319	41%
Did not consent to recontact at Wave 2	1,026	18%
Did not engage with the Wave 2 survey	369	7%
Started but did not complete the Wave 2 survey	831	15%
Refused to take part in the Wave 2 survey	93	2%

## Demographic and employment characteristics

Overall, demographic characteristics of Wave 2 non-responders were fairly similar to the Wave 2 and Wave 1 achieved samples. Non-responders were, however, less likely than Wave 2 responders to be White ethnic background (73% of non-responders compared to 79% in Wave 2). Non-responders were more likely to be Black (11% of non-responders

compared to eight per cent at Wave 2) and to not have disclosed their ethnic background in Wave 1 (six per cent said prefer not to say compared to four per cent at Wave 2).

Wave 2 non-responders were less likely than Wave 2 completers to be male (14% compared to 17%), although the proportion of females was consistent (83% for both). Wave 2 non-responders were more likely not to provide a response (two per cent compared with one per cent).

While there was a higher proportion of ASYE non-responders compared to the Wave 2 achieved sample, this reflects the small proportion of ASYEs at Wave 2 rather than these respondents being less likely to respond in Wave 2; the proportion of non-responders at Wave 2 is consistent with the proportion of ASYE respondents at Wave 1 (seven per cent compared to six per cent). Wave 2 non-responders were slightly more likely to be front line practitioners (56% compared with 53% of Wave 2 responders) and less likely to be senior service managers or directors (13% compared with 17%).

There was very little variation in employment situation between the achieved samples and the Wave 2 non-responders. Although a higher proportion of non-responders (98%) worked in local authority child and family social work compared with Wave 2 (94%), this again reflects the changing Wave 2 cohort rather than these types of respondent being more likely to drop out after Wave 1; the proportion of Wave 1 completers working in local authority child and family social work was consistent with Wave 2 non-responders (both 98%).

## Attitudes

As is seen with various findings throughout the report, those who completed the Wave 1 survey but did not respond to the Wave 2 survey had been less positive about their experiences of various aspects of their working life at Wave 1 compared with those completing both Waves had been at Wave 1. This can be seen in Table A.13 in the technical annex, for example:

- 70% of Wave 2 non-responders reported being satisfied overall with their social work careers to date, compared with 74% of the Wave 1 sample and 75% of the Wave 2 sample.
- 69% of Wave 2 non-responders reported feeling loyal to their organisation, compared with 72% of the Wave 1 sample and 76% of the Wave 2 sample.
- 50% of Wave 2 non-responders reported feeling valued by their organisation, compared with 54% of the Wave 1 sample and 59% of the Wave 2 sample.<sup>5</sup>

## The structure of this report

The rest of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 looks at the **profile of who is still working in local authority child and family social work**, the extent of job moves between different LAs, and the extent of moves out of LA child and family social work into other roles either within social work or outside the profession altogether;
- Chapter 3 focuses on child and family social workers' **working hours, caseloads and workplace place wellbeing**;
- Chapter 4 details child and family social workers' **views on their employer, line manager, and working environment**;
- Chapter 5 explores **job satisfaction and career progression** in child and family social work;
- Chapter 6 focuses on child and family social workers' **short-term career plans and what influences these**; why people leave child and family social work and potential influences on coming back, among those who left the profession between Wave 1 and Wave 2; and
- Chapter 7 focuses on the **experiences of current ASYEs**, comparing their views with those of ASYEs in Wave 1.

Throughout the report, the survey and qualitative data are reported by topic area and theme, making it clear which findings are based on the survey and which are drawn from the qualitative research. Only statistically significant survey findings (at the 95% confidence interval) are referred to in the text of the report, unless otherwise specified. Data labels in charts accompanied by an asterisk (“\*”) indicate a statistically significant difference.

## 2. Who is still working in local authority child and family social work?

This chapter examines the employment situation of all participants in Wave 2 of the survey. It examines the employment status of those working in child and family social work (including movement from direct employment to agency work and vice versa) as well as those who have moved out of the profession. There is also a brief summary of the profile of participants who participated in Wave 2 of the survey.

The key findings from this chapter are:

- The vast majority (94%) of participants were still employed in local authority child and family social work at Wave 2.
- Those still working in local authority child and family social work were typically in a similar situation as they were in Wave 1. Nine in ten (89%) were still working at the same local authority.
- Overall, one in ten (10%) had moved to a different local authority over the same time period. A further two per cent had moved from direct employment with a local authority to agency or self-employment.
- Pay was the largest single motivation for moving into agency work (reported as the main factor by 33% of these social workers), and relocation was the largest single main motivation for getting a job in a different local authority (15%).
- Only a small minority (five per cent) had left local authority child and family social work between waves, but half of those were still employed in social work (either in private or voluntary sector child and family social work, or in a different area of social work).
- One in six (16%) of those who remained in local authority child and family social work had been promoted between Wave 1 and Wave 2. Most (86%) had stayed in the same job.

### Profile of participants in Wave 2

As in Wave 1, most participants in Wave 2 were female (82% in both waves), and roughly one in six were male (17%, compared with 16% in Wave 1). This is fairly consistent with the DfE 2018 child and family social worker population statistics,<sup>6</sup> the year the cohort was sampled, where the proportion of female social workers is slightly higher (86%) and the proportion of males slightly lower (14%).

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<sup>6</sup> [DfE Children's Social Work Workforce Data 2018](#)

Given that less than a year had passed between the two surveys, the age distribution was consistent with Wave 1. Similar proportions were aged 34 years or under (23%, down from 25% in Wave 1); aged 35 to 44 (26% in both waves); or aged 45 to 54 (26%, compared with 27% in Wave 1). One in five (22%) were aged 55 to 64 (20% in Wave 1) and two per cent were aged 65 or over (1% in Wave 1). The age profile of the Wave 2 achieved sample was slightly older than the child and family social worker population in 2018, which is to be expected given that the survey cohort is getting older; this trend will continue throughout the study.

Three-quarters (76%) of participants in Wave 2 were White British (compared with 73% in Wave 1) indicating that the response at Wave 2 was lower among social workers from Black and Minority ethnic groups. One in ten (9%) were Black African/Caribbean/ Black British (down from 11% in Wave 1), and other minority ethnic groups (including Asian/Asian British and mixed ethnicity) made up the rest of the cohort (12%). The child and family social worker population statistics when the survey began<sup>7</sup>, in 2018, consisted of a slightly higher proportion of White (79%) and Black African/Caribbean/ Black British (11%) social workers and fewer other minority ethnic groups (9%).

As in Wave 1, most participants in Wave 2 (80%) did not have a long-term physical or mental health condition, but the proportion who did increased (19%, compared with 15% in Wave 1). A small increase could be expected given that the cohort is ageing, and health is linked to age.

Half (51%) of social workers had some form of childcare or other caring responsibilities. They were most likely to care for school-aged children (35% of respondents), followed by caring for other family members or friends (12%) and caring for pre-school aged children (11%). A minority cared for Children with Disabilities (3%). These figures were all comparable with Wave 1.

## Employment status at Wave 2

The vast majority (94%) of Wave 2 participants were still employed in local authority child and family social work at the time of the survey. This is four percentage points lower than in Wave 1 (98%),<sup>8</sup> highlighting the relatively small movement out of local authority child and family social work between waves, which were conducted between nine and 12 months apart.

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<sup>7</sup> [DfE Children's Social Work Workforce Data 2018](#)

<sup>8</sup> The remaining two per cent of participants in Wave 1 who were not working in child and family social work were either working in social work, but outside child and family social work, or had left social work altogether.

There was a range of destinations for those moving out of local authority child and family social work, each mentioned by one per cent of Wave 2 participants. Similar proportions had moved into a different type of child and family social work; a different type of social work altogether; left social work entirely for a different type of job; were taking a career break; or were doing something else. Most of those doing something else were aged 55 to 64 or older and had retired between Wave 1 and Wave 2.

Those still working in local authority child and family social work at Wave 2 were typically in a similar situation as they were in Wave 1. Indeed, nine in ten (89%) were still working either directly for the local authority/ Trust (79%), via an agency (9%), or on secondment (1%) at the same local authority as Wave 1. One in ten (10%) had moved local authorities between waves, and this was more likely to be the case if they were working for an agency (6%, compared with four per cent working directly for a local authority). Agency staff are likely to be on shorter-term or casual contracts and therefore have more scope to move around between different local authorities.

Three per cent of participants had moved out of social work completely by Wave 2. These were more likely than average to have entered the profession by qualifying with a CQSW (6%). The CQSW is a historic qualification and the higher than average proportion of leavers who qualified through this route relates to older people retiring from the profession. Indeed, those no longer working in social work were more likely than average to be aged 55 to 64 (5%) or 65+ (9%).

The reasons for leaving social work, among the small number of leavers in the sample to date, are explored in more detail in Chapter 6. The falling proportion of those working in local authority child and family social work between Wave 1 and Wave 2 can, in part, be explained by looking at their prior job satisfaction. Social workers who were dissatisfied with their job in Wave 1 were more likely to have moved to another area of social work, or to have left the profession altogether (six per cent, compared with less than one per cent who were satisfied with their job at Wave 1).

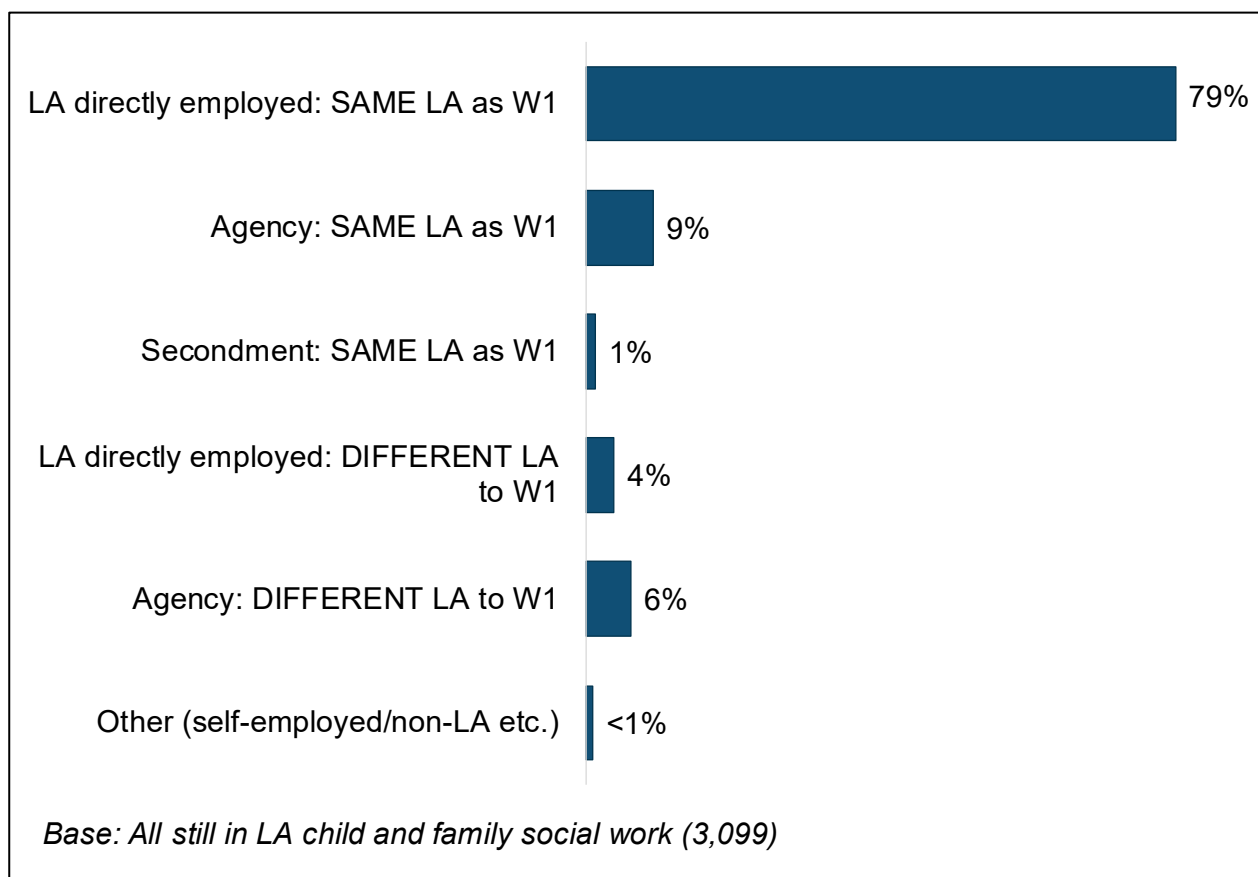
Movement between local authorities is also influenced by job satisfaction. Social workers in child and family social work who were satisfied with their job at Wave 1 were more likely to have stayed at the same local authority, either with an agency or employed directly (87%, compared with 77% who were dissatisfied).

Furthermore, social workers who had moved local authorities between waves (either working for an agency, or directly for a different local authority) were more likely to:

- have not received any employer supported CPD in the past 12 months (31%, compared with eight per cent who had);
- be based in Greater London (14%, compared with 10% overall); and
- be based at local authorities rated as 'inadequate' by Ofsted (16%, compared with four per cent of those based at outstanding-rated local authorities).



**Figure 2.1 Whether local authority child and family social workers worked for the same local authority in Wave 2 as they had done in Wave 1<sup>9</sup>**



### Profile of agency workers

As seen in Figure 2.1, 15% (472 social workers) of those working in LA child and family social work at Wave 2 were employed via an agency. This comprised of nine per cent (277) were working at the same LA as in Wave 1 and six per cent (195) who were working at a different LA). Agency workers were more likely than others to:

- be male (20% of males were agency workers, compared with 13% of females);
- be aged 55 or older (17% of 55-64 years olds and 27% of those aged 65+ were agency workers, compared with 15% overall);
- be from a Black ethnic background (44%) or from an 'Other' ethnic group (22%);
- be located in London (27%) or the South West (23%);
- be working at an 'inadequate' local authority (25%);
- be a front line practitioner (20% of front line practitioners were agency workers);

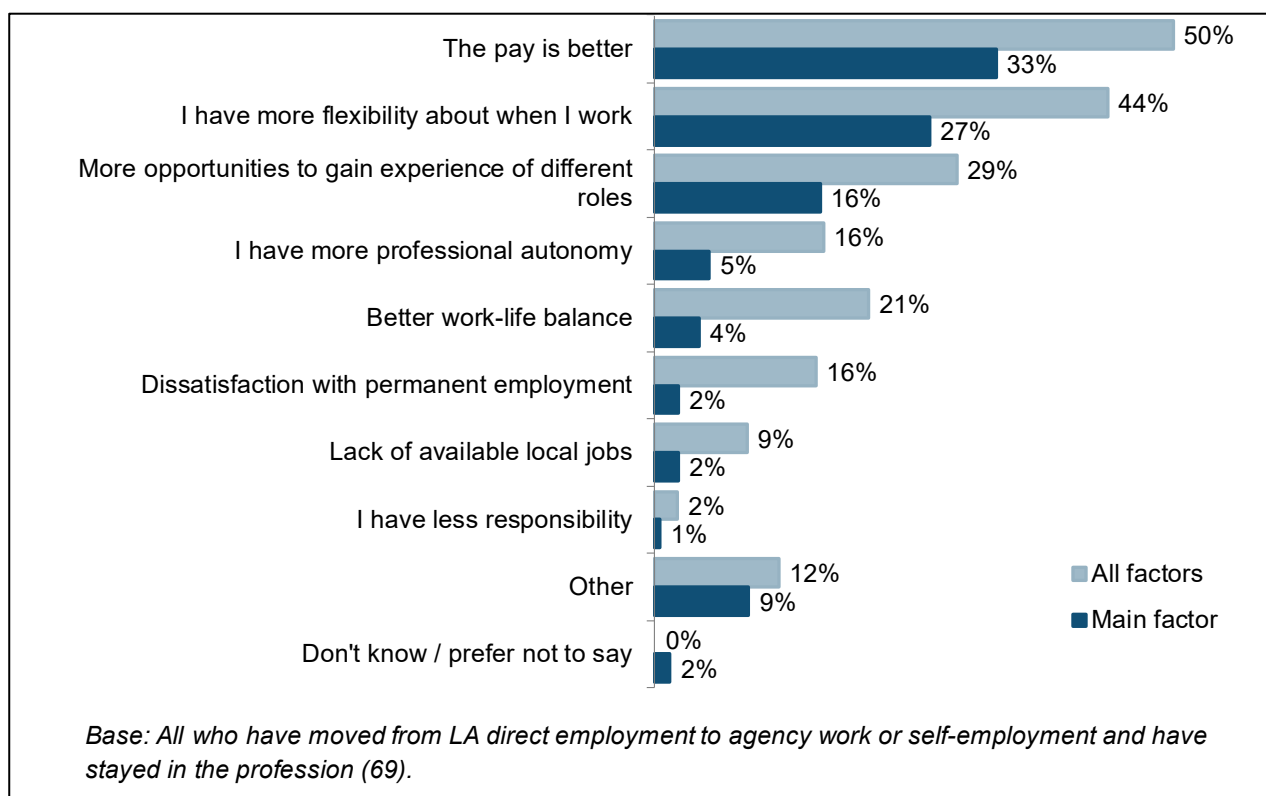
<sup>9</sup> A minority of local authority child and family social workers had stayed at the same local authority in Wave 1 and 2 but had moved from an agency to direct employment (and vice-versa). The chart shows their current status.

- work in Child in Need / Child Protection (19% were agency workers), Duty / First Response (18%); Assessment (16%) or Kinship Care (16%); and
- be dissatisfied with their job overall (19% of those who were dissatisfied were agency workers).

## Motivations for moving to an agency or becoming self-employed

Overall, two per cent of social workers who responded in Wave 2 had moved from direct employment with a local authority to agency work or self-employment since Wave 1. Figure 2.2 shows all factors, and the one main factor, influencing this decision among these 69 respondents. There are two key motivations for this move: pay (a factor for 50% and the main reason for one-third (33%)), and increased flexibility of working hours (a factor for 44% and the main reason for over one-quarter (27%)).

**Figure 2.2 Reasons for moving to agency work**



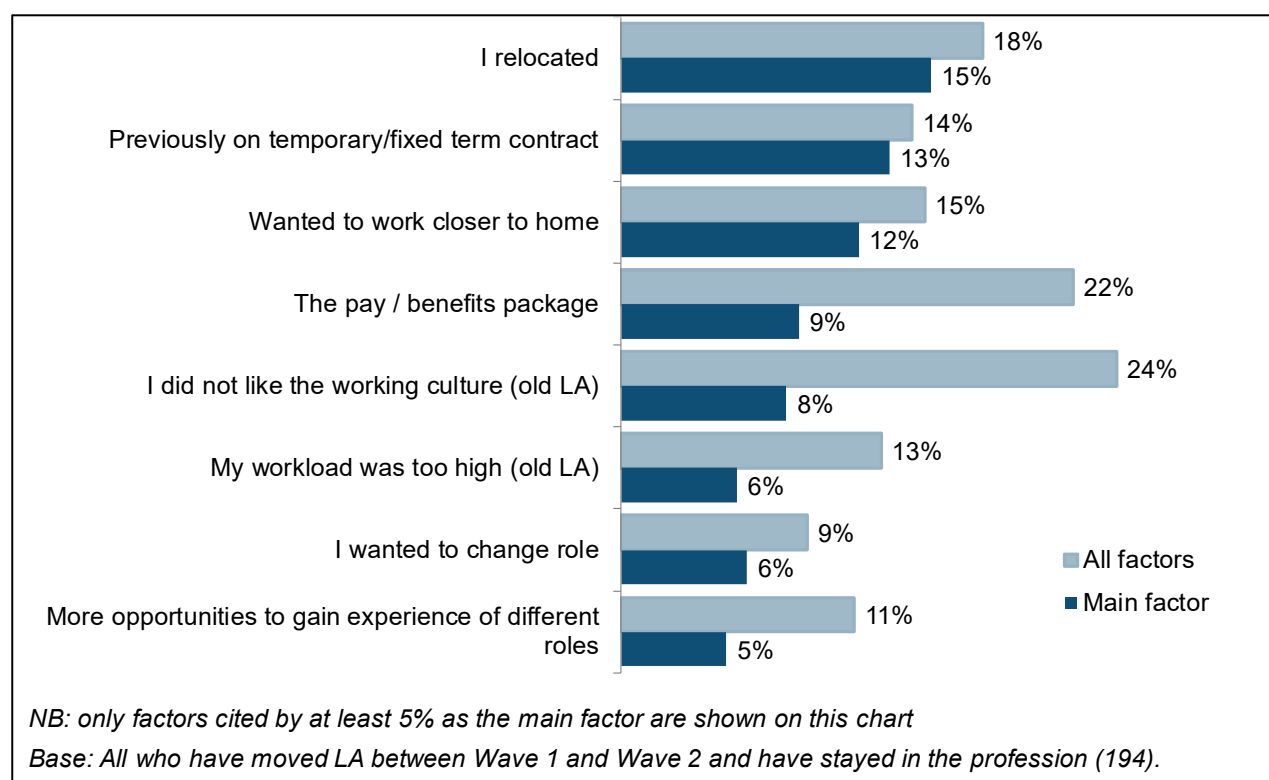
One in six (16%) reported the opportunity to gain experience in different roles as the main motivation for moving into agency work or self-employment. Other factors, including greater professional autonomy and work-life balance, were contributory, but rarely reported as the main reason.

## Motivations for moving to a different local authority

Overall, one in ten (10%) local authority child and family social workers were working in a different local authority in Wave 2 than in Wave 1.<sup>10</sup>

As Figure 2.3 shows, location factors were the largest main factor for social workers to move local authorities, with 15% reporting that they had relocated, and 12% reporting that they wanted to work closer to home, when asked for their one main reason for changing employers. While working culture and pay were the most common wider influences on the decision to move to a different local authority (mentioned as a factor by 24% and 22% respectively), they were less prevalent as the main reason (mentioned by nine per cent and seven per cent, respectively).

**Figure 2.3 Factors influencing social workers' decision to move local authorities between Wave 1 and Wave 2**

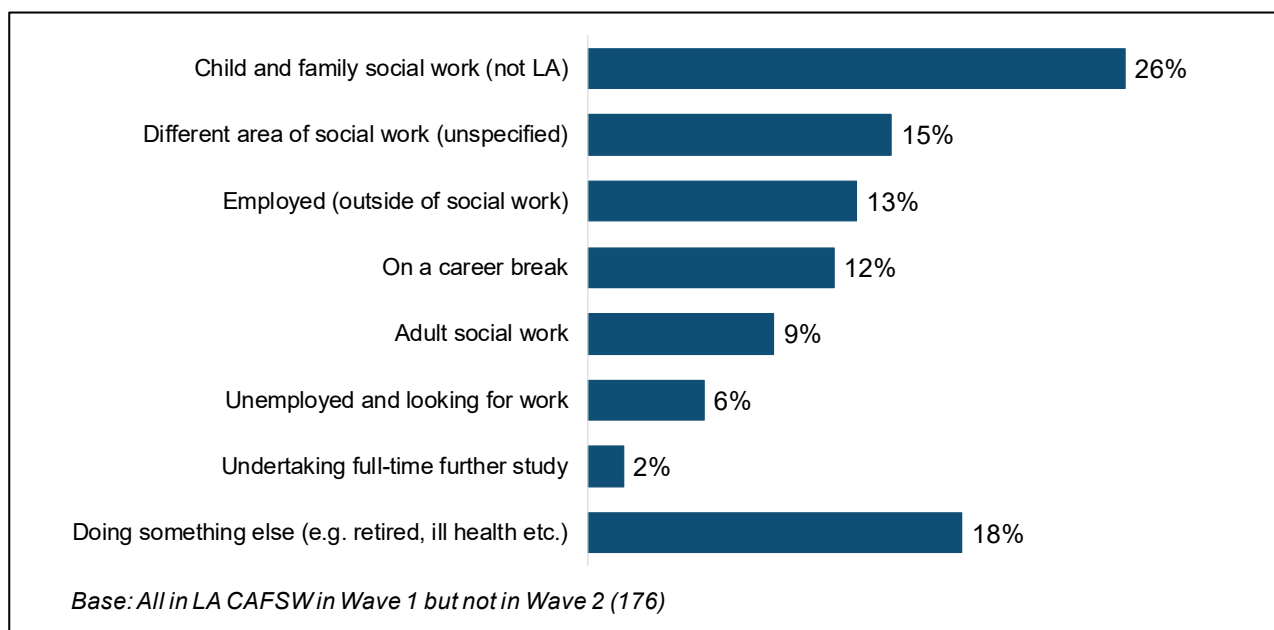


<sup>10</sup> This includes local authority child and family social workers who moved to an agency at a different local authority.

## Employment situation of those leaving local authority child and family social work

Only a small proportion (five per cent) of those who had been in local authority child and family social work in Wave 1 had left by Wave 2. While this is a lower figure than other sources suggest, it is worth bearing in mind that only one year, and in some cases less, had passed between waves and it is likely that some of those who had left between waves did not respond to the Wave 2 survey; this may explain why the proportion is small. Of this small minority of the Wave 2 sample who had left local authority child and family social work, half of them were still in social work. They were most likely to have stayed in child and family social work roles but moved to other types of employer, such as in the voluntary or private sectors (26%, see Figure 2.4). A similar proportion overall were working either in adult social work (9%) or a different area of social work (15%).

**Figure 2.4 Employment status of those who had left local authority child and family social work between Wave 1 and Wave 2**



Around one in eight of those who took part in both waves and who had left local authority child and family social work at Wave 2 had moved into a different type of job (13%), or were on a career break (12%).<sup>11</sup> Six per cent (10 participants) were unemployed at Wave 2: half of these were aged 55 to 64. Two per cent (three participants) had returned to full-time education.

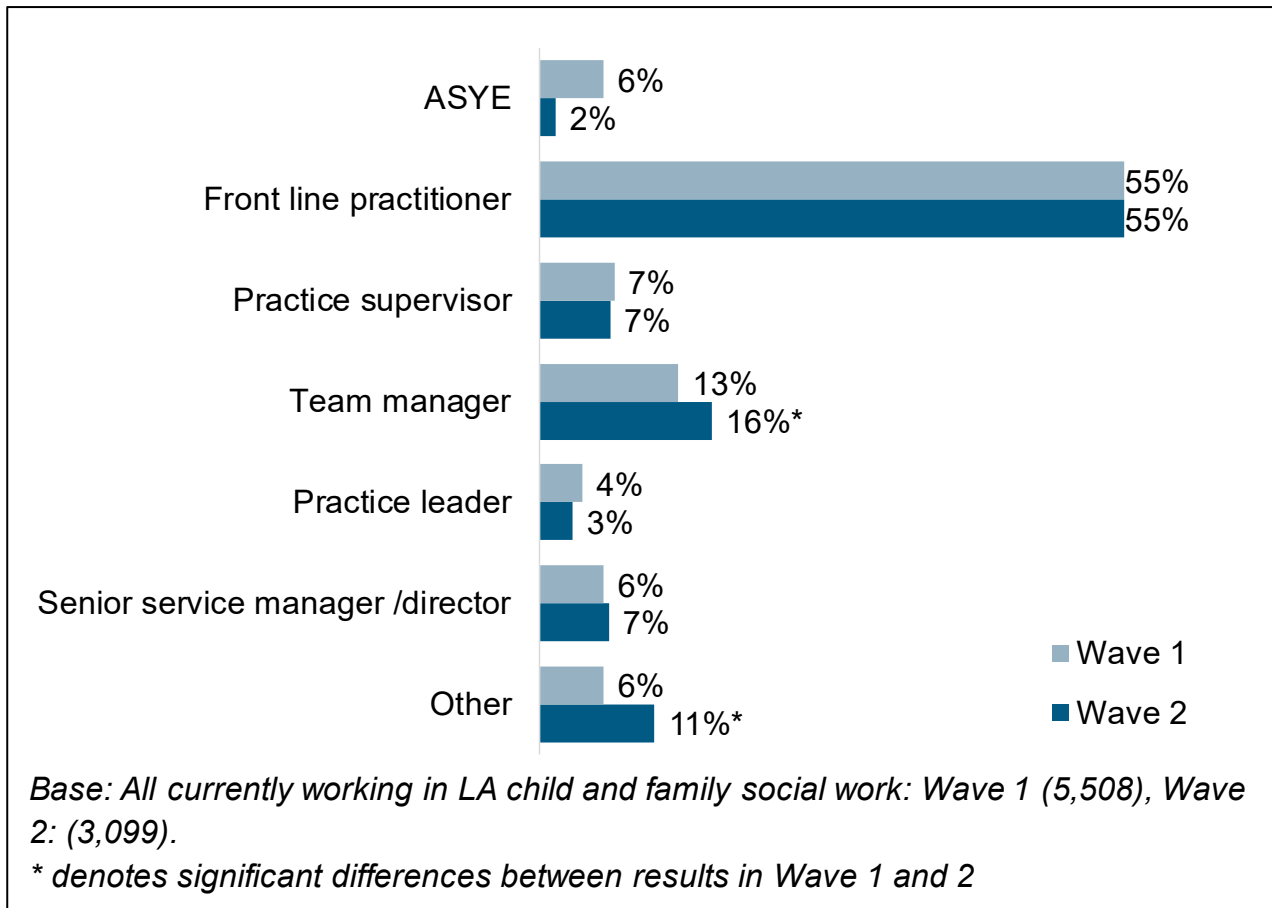
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<sup>11</sup> This includes for reasons such as travelling or caring responsibilities. It does not include people on maternity or paternity leave, who are categorised as still employed.

## Job roles and areas of practice

Figure 2.5 shows job roles among those who were working in child and family social work at both Wave 1 and Wave 2. These are presented in order of seniority.

**Figure 2.5 Job role among all local authority child and family social workers in Wave 1 and 2**



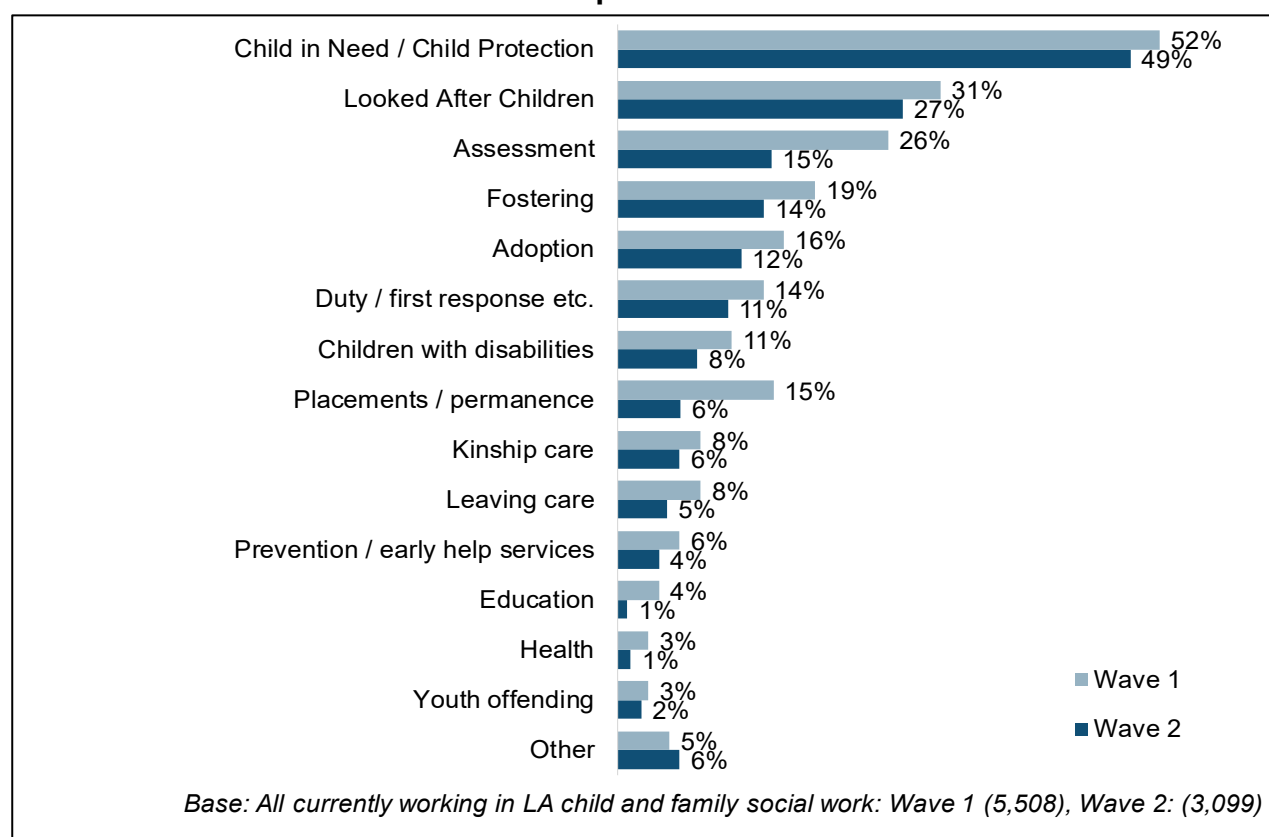
As in Wave 1, the majority of social workers who took part in Wave 2 were front line practitioners (55% in both waves), and the proportions of practice supervisors, practice leaders and senior service managers was consistent across both waves.

However, focusing only on those working in LA child and family social work in both waves, the proportion of team managers and senior service managers increased in Wave 2, at 16% for team managers (up from 13% in Wave 1), and seven per cent for senior service managers (up from three per cent in Wave 1). As previously discussed, the proportion of non-responders at Wave 2 was consistent across all job roles, suggesting that the rising proportion of senior service, and team managers is influenced by promotions from more junior roles. For instance, a high proportion of practice leaders (39%) and practice supervisors (17%) moved into team manager roles in Wave 2. Additionally, team managers comprised close to one-third (30%) of all promoted LA child and family social workers in Wave 2, and they were most likely to be promoted to senior service manager roles (6% of all team managers in Wave 1 made this transition).

Social workers were most likely to change job roles if they had been working in LA child and family social work for up to 1 year (42% of these social workers had done so between Wave 1 and 2, compared to 16% on average). This reflects movement from the ASYE to front line practice (77% of social workers on their ASYE had been promoted between Wave 1 and 2, the vast majority of them (75%) into front line practitioner roles). Those who had been in the profession for between 2 and 3 years (11%), and more than 10 years (12%) were less likely than average to change job roles.

Figure 2.6 shows the distribution of LA child and family social workers in both waves by area of practice. Social workers could select more than one area of practice as their 'main focus', hence these figures sum to more than 100%.

**Figure 2.6 Area of practice among local authority child and family social workers in Wave 2 compared with Wave 1**



In line with Wave 1, the most common areas of practice were Child in Need / Child Protection (49%, compared with 52% in Wave 1) and Looked After Children (27%, compared with 31% in Wave 1). The proportions in many of the other areas of practice decreased compared with Wave 1, suggesting that social workers may be specialising in specific areas of practice as they progress in their career.

Reflecting the same differences in Wave 1, area of practice was influenced by how long social workers had spent in the profession. Social workers with ten or more years' experience were more likely than average to work in Fostering (20% compared with 14%

on average) and Adoption (16% compared with 12% on average). By contrast, they were significantly less likely to work in Child Protection (43%, compared with 49% on average). The latter finding is pertinent considering it is, by some margin, the largest single area of practice.

Looking at main practice area by demographics finds that younger social workers aged under 25 or 25 to 34 were substantially more likely than those in older age groups to work in Child Protection/ Children in Need. For example, almost three-quarters of those aged under 25 (72%) and three in five of those aged 25 to 34 (59%) worked in this area, compared with around half of 35 to 44 year olds (49%) and 45 to 54 year olds (47%). Older age groups were more likely to report that Fostering or Adoption, or other more specialised areas, were the main focus of their work. For example, 17% of 45-54 year olds, and 21% of 55-64 year olds, worked in Fostering, compared with just eight per cent of 25-34 year olds and five per cent of those under 25.

Male respondents were more likely to work in the Looked After Children practice area (31%, compared with 27% of female social workers) and female social workers were more likely to work in Fostering (15% compared with nine per cent of males).

## **Movement between grades of job**

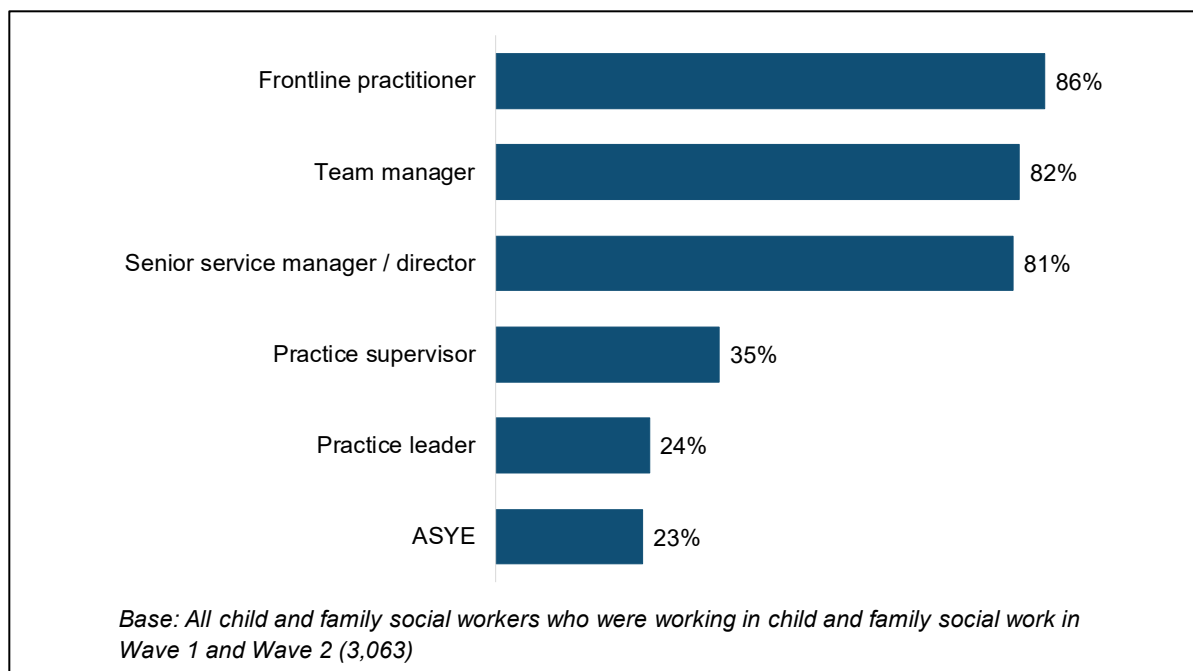
One in six (16%) local authority child and family social workers who were still in the profession had been promoted between Wave 1 and 2. The remainder (86%) stayed in the same level of job.

Figure 2.7 shows the proportion of social workers in each job role who stayed in that role in Wave 1 and 2. Those most likely to remain in the same role were front line practitioners (86%), team managers (82%), and senior service managers (81%). By contrast, one-third (35%) of practice supervisors and one-quarter (24%) of practice leaders were in the same role in Wave 1 and 2. Although the bulk of newly qualified social workers start their ASYE as graduate intake in the autumn of each year, it is possible to start at any point if recruitment takes place across the year. One-quarter (23%) of ASYE social workers in Wave 1 were in the same role at Wave 2, with most (75%) having moved into front line practitioner roles.

Evidence from the qualitative interviews found that social workers who had been promoted did not necessarily want a more 'managerial' level job. For example, one interviewee was enjoying the extra responsibilities she had been able to take on as a senior practitioner, which she felt had enriched her job without her needing to take on more team management responsibilities. This had encouraged her to want to remain in the profession and develop her role further.

“I’m doing some other things that I’m finding interesting, like being involved in some project work to help shape the service, and I’m really enjoying that. So, yes, definitely to stay in the same job, and seek out other opportunities that I can do alongside it.”

**Figure 2.7 Proportion of social workers who stayed in the same job role in both Wave 1 and 2**



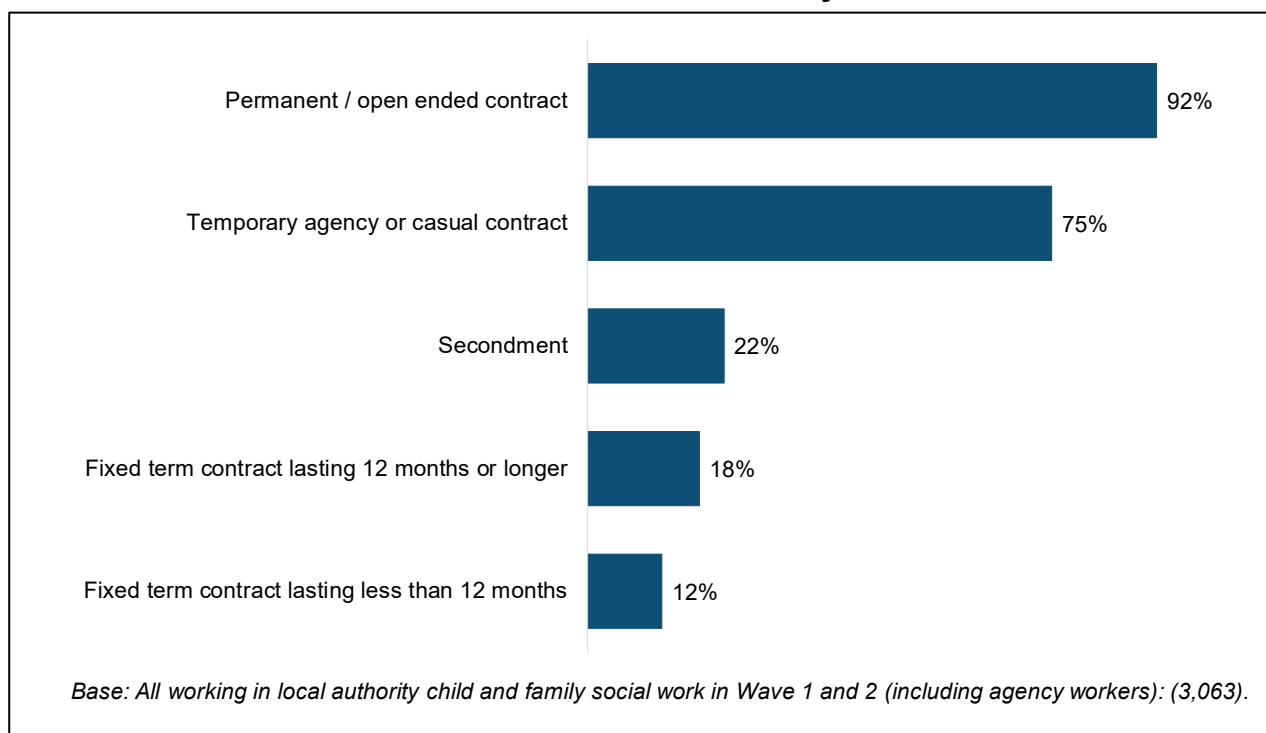
## Contractual arrangements

The overall profile of contractual arrangements for those who were working in local authority child and family social work at both waves was consistent between Wave 1 and 2. Overall, 86% of local authority child and family social workers remained on the same type of contract in Wave 2, with just 14% changing contract type. As in Wave 1, four in five (82%) were employed on an open-ended contract and one in eight (13%) were on a temporary or casual contract. The remainder (5%) were on fixed-term contracts or secondments.

Although at an overall level results were consistent across waves, there was some fluctuation at an individual level. As Figure 2.8 shows, the vast majority (92%) of social workers on permanent/open-ended contracts were on this contract type in both waves, and three-quarters (75%) of those on temporary or casual contracts at Wave 2 had been on the same type of contract in Wave 1.



**Figure 2.8 Proportion of social workers in the same type of contract arrangement in both waves of the survey<sup>12</sup>**



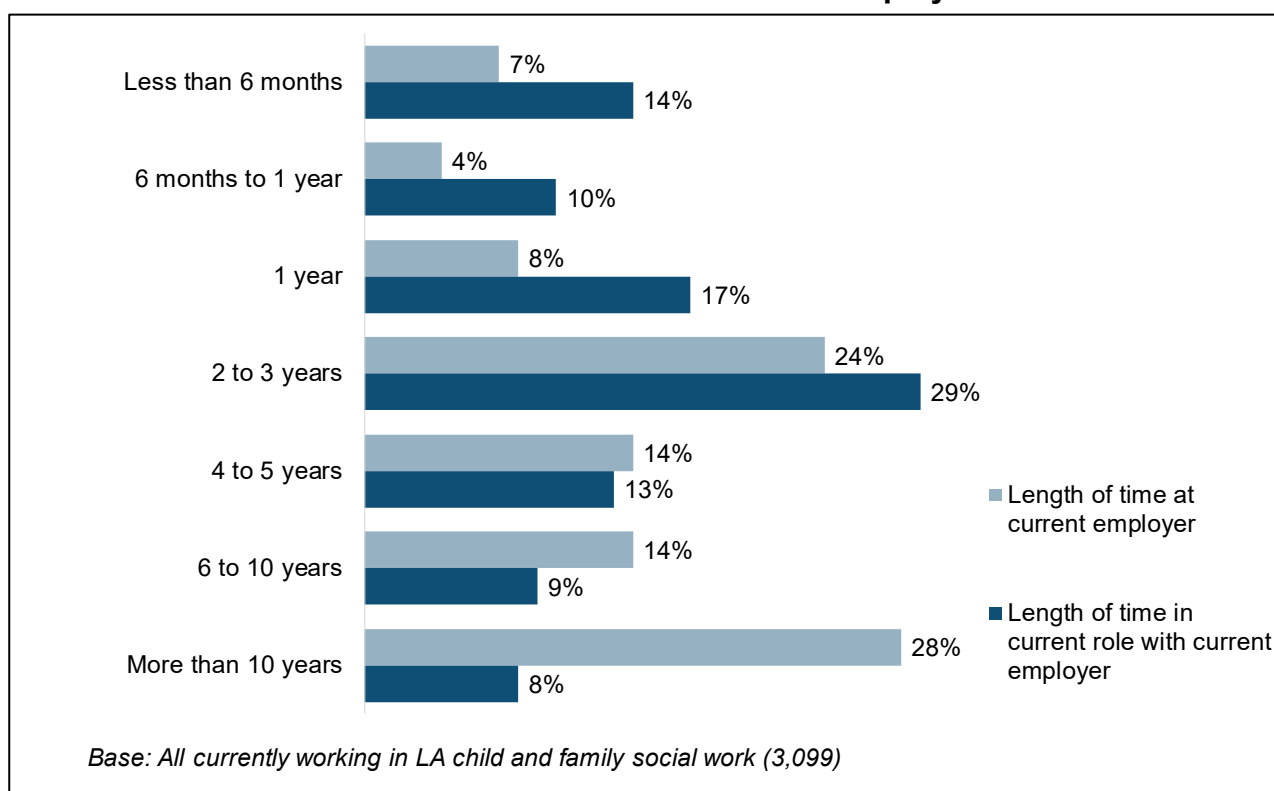
However, there was significant movement across the other types of contract. Only one in five (18%) social workers on a fixed term contract lasting 12 months or longer in Wave 1 remained on a similar contract in Wave 2; three in five (61%) had moved to a permanent/open ended contract by Wave 2. Those who had been on a fixed term contract lasting less than 12 months at Wave 1 were very likely to have changed contract arrangement (88%): most of them were now working on a temporary agency or casual contract (63% of those who were on a fixed term contract at Wave 1).

## Length of time at current employer

Social workers may move job roles frequently but are relatively loyal to their employer. Figure 2.9 shows that just three in 10 (30%) social workers in Wave 2 have been in their current role with their current employer for four or more years, but over half (56%) have been with their employer for four or more years.

<sup>12</sup> Due to the low base sizes of social workers on consultancy and other contract types, these have been removed from this figure.

**Figure 2.9 Length of time social workers have spent at their current employer, and in their current role at their current employer**



Reinforcing findings earlier in this chapter, agency workers were more likely to have been in their current role at their current employer for less than six months (36%, compared with just 10% of local authority-based social workers).

The following were more likely to have been in their current role at their current employer for more than 10 years:

- older social workers aged 55 to 64 (19%) or 65 or older (26%);
- those working at local authorities rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted (9%, compared with four per cent at authorities rated 'inadequate');
- those with a mental or physical health condition (14%, compared with six per cent of those without). This is related to age, as older social workers aged 45 to 54 (22%) and 55 to 64 (25%) were most likely to have a health condition;
- those working in Health (20%) and Fostering (16%) (compared with eight per cent on average); and
- those who qualified with a CQSW (21%) and Diploma in Social Work (15%) (compared with six per cent of those who undertook an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in social work). This is also related to age, as older social workers were also the most likely to have qualified with the CQSW or Diploma in Social Work.

### 3. Workplace well-being

This chapter explores social worker well-being by considering working hours and caseloads, reported stress levels and workload demands, views on the extent of managerial support for work-life balance, and access to flexible working arrangements.

Key findings in this chapter include:

- Overall, three-quarters (75%) of social workers reported working more than their contracted hours either 'all the time' or 'most weeks'.
- In a typical week, three-quarters of social workers (75%) spent time doing direct work with children, families or carers, and these were more likely to be case holding practitioners. One-quarter (24%) did not spend time doing direct work, and these were more likely to be team and service managers, as one might expect.
- The mean number of cases held was 18.8 (19.8 for case holding full-time workers and 15.3 for case holding part-time workers). It was most common for those in case holder roles to have responsibility for between 16-20 cases.
- More than half of social workers at Wave 2 agreed they feel stressed (56%), their workload is too high (54%) and they are asked to fulfil too many roles in their job (55%), an increase compared with Wave 1. Agreement with all of these three indicators was higher among those working for local authorities rated as 'inadequate'.
- One-quarter (25%) of social workers who reported they were not stressed by their job at Wave 1 felt stressed at Wave 2, and they were more likely to be front line practitioners and working in Children in Need or Child Protection teams. Three-quarters (76%) of social workers who reported feeling stressed at Wave 1 remained stressed at Wave 2, and these are also more likely to be front line practitioners working in those teams.
- Time off in lieu remains the most common flexible working arrangement social workers used (81%), followed by flexi-time (63%). Paid overtime (16%) and job-sharing arrangements (5%) were much less widespread.

#### Contracted and actual working hours

Social workers were asked how many hours they were contracted to work per week. Throughout this section full-time work is considered to be more than 35 hours and part-time as any range between 1-35 hours, recognising that 31-35 hours is on the cusp of full-time work (7% of child and family workers worked between 31 and 35 hours).

Contracted working hours were consistent with Wave 1; most social workers held full-time contracts with 78% contracted to work between 36-40 hours a week. The mean number of contracted hours remains at 35. Working on a part-time contract (in particular, 30 hours per week or below) was more common among women than men (23% compared with 15%), as in Wave 1. Part-time contracts continued to be more prevalent

among those who had caring responsibilities (27%, compared with 15% of those who did not have any caring responsibilities).

Social workers were also asked the *actual* number of hours they typically worked per week (regardless of their *contracted* hours). Overall, three-quarters (75%) of social workers reported working more than their contracted hours either 'all the time' (39%) or 'most weeks' (36%). Focusing only on those who took part in both waves, at Wave 2, social workers were slightly less likely to report 'occasionally' working overtime and more likely to report working overtime 'most weeks', suggesting some respondents were now working more overtime compared to Wave 1. Social workers continued to work on average seven hours more per week than their contracted hours, with a mean of 42 hours worked compared with a mean of 35 hours contracted (consistent with findings from Wave 1).

Table 3.1 shows that, in a typical week, those whose contracted hours were on the cusp of full-time work (31-35 hours per week) were most likely to work more hours than they were contracted (87%), an increase from Wave 1 (84%). A greater proportion of those contracted to work 16-20 hours at Wave 2 reported to be working 21-30 hours compared with Wave 1 (71% compared with 55%, respectively).

In terms of actual hours worked, senior service managers worked the longest hours compared to other job roles. They were more likely to work more than 40 hours in a typical week compared to the average social worker (71% compared with 53%, respectively). Senior service managers and team leaders were also more likely to report typically working 46-50 hours in a week (32% and 26% respectively) compared with most other job roles (ASYE, eight per cent, front line practitioner, 15%, practice supervisor, 15%, practice leader, 18%).

Reflecting their long hours, team managers and senior service managers were also more likely to work overtime 'all the time' (48% and 52%, respectively) compared with 39% on average. Both ASYE and practice supervisors were more likely to work some overtime 'most weeks' (51% and 46%, respectively) compared with 36% on average. Two thirds (66%) of those who reported working more than their contracted hours 'all the time' at Wave 1 said the same at Wave 2, while almost three in ten (28%) of those who said they worked beyond their contracted hours 'most weeks' in Wave 1 said they did this 'all the time' at Wave 2. Further, one in three (29%) of those who did this 'occasionally' at Wave 1 now did this 'most weeks'.

**Table 3.1 Contracted working hours versus actual working hours<sup>13</sup>***Red shading denotes work above contracted hours.*

		Contracted hours			
		16-20	21-30	31-35	36-40
		%	%	%	%
<b>Actual hours</b>	1-15	-	-	-	-
	16-20	23%	1%	-	-
	21-30	71%	56%	1%	2%
	31-35	-	26%	12%	1%
	36-40	1%	14%	37%	28%
	41-45	1%	2%	31%	37%
	46-50	-	1%	14%	23%
	51+	-	-	5%	9%
<b>Any overtime</b>		<b>73%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>69%</b>
<i>Base excl. those unable to state either their contracted or actual hours</i>		100	273	203	2,205

Notably, social workers in local authorities which Ofsted rated as ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’ were more likely than those working in authorities rated ‘outstanding’ to be working more than 45 hours per week (27% each, compared with 21%).

Other demographic differences of note include:

- almost half of agency workers reported working overtime ‘all the time’ (47%) compared with 38% of those who were directly-employed by a LA;
- black social workers were more likely to work overtime ‘all the time’ (46% compared with 39% on average). As a greater proportion of Black social workers are agency (44% compared with 15% on average), it may be this is because of the nature of the contract;
- those working in social work for 2-3 years were more likely than average to report working more than their contracted hours ‘all the time’ (44%);

<sup>13</sup> Figures for those with 1-15 contracted hours or 41+ contracted hours are not shown because the base size is <25 for these groups, which is too few to be considered statistically

- social workers in local authorities with an Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement' were also more likely to report working more than their contracted hours 'all the time' (44%); and
- those with caring responsibilities for family and friends were more likely to report working overtime 'all of the time' whereas those with caring responsibilities of pre-school aged children were the least likely (45% and 31% respectively).

Working long hours, particularly over an extended period of time, was a common issue raised in the qualitative interviews, and often contributed to feelings of 'burnout' among social workers who had left or were considering leaving. One reflected back on her decision to leave the profession and attributed this to her very long working hours, even though she was employed part-time:

"I've been able to reflect on that, the fact that I was working eighteen hours a day, and literally I was, I was at work at 7 o'clock in the morning, finishing at six in the evening, coming home, having something to eat and then having to open my laptop and work again. And looking at where I am now, I'm probably, what encouraged that decision is the fact that it isn't okay to work that amount of hours."

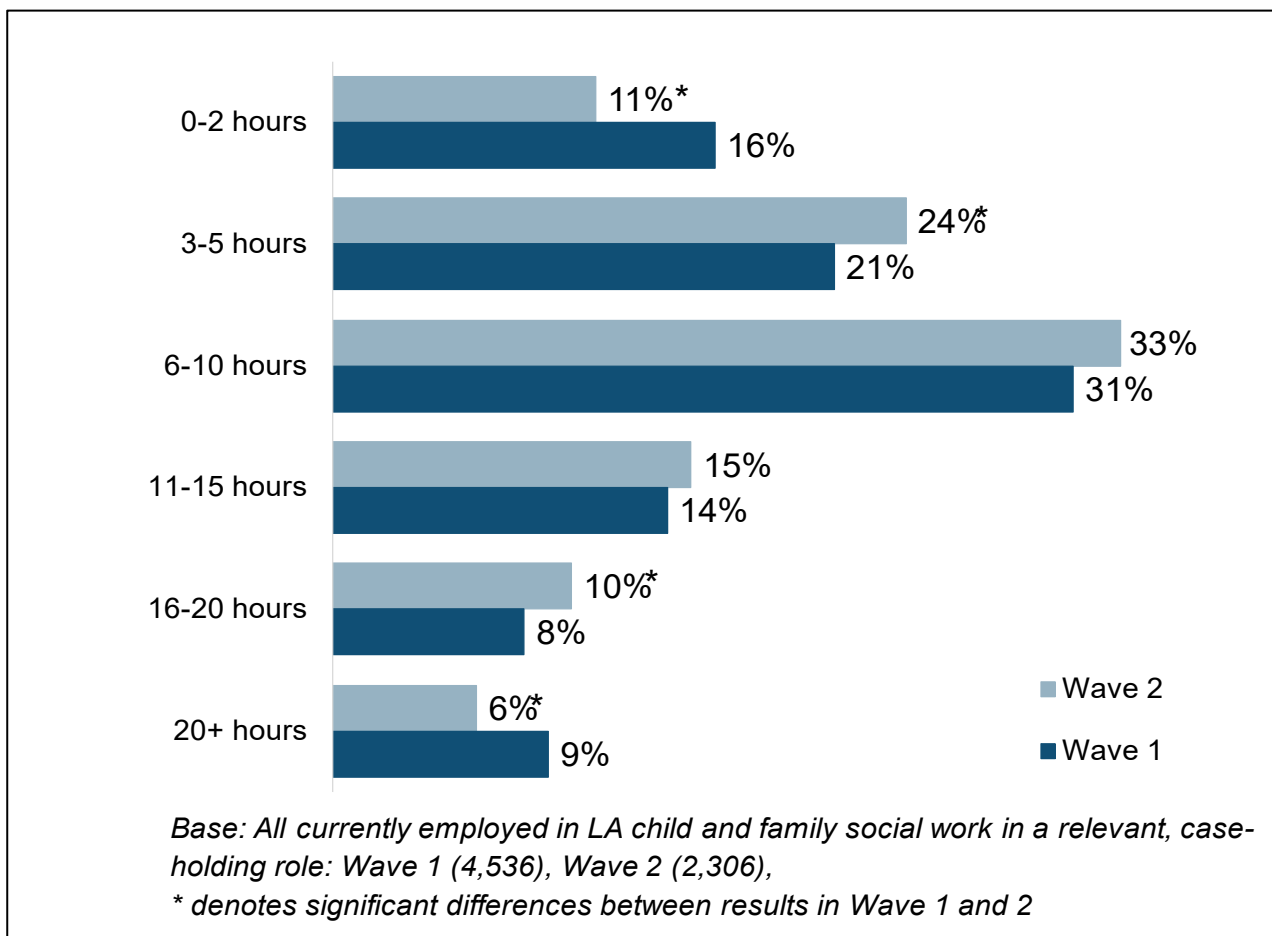
## Direct work with families

Social workers were asked how many hours in a typical week they spend doing direct work with children and families/carers. Three-quarters (75%) of the social workers in the study spent time in a typical week doing direct work with children, families or carers, and these were more likely to be case holding practitioners. One-quarter (24%) did not spend time doing direct work, and these were more likely to be team and service managers.

As shown in Figure 3.1, two thirds (33%) of social workers who worked directly with children and families spent between 6-10 hours per week doing so, on average, and this was consistent with Wave 1 (31%). The proportion spending 5 hours or less per week on direct work with children and families was also consistent (35% in Wave 2 and 37% in Wave 1). More social workers in Wave 2 spent between 16-20 hours with children and families (10% compared with 8% in Wave 1) although fewer spent at least 20 hours (6% compared with nine per cent in Wave 1). Overall, this meant that the proportion spending at least 16 hours directly with children and families was consistent across waves (16% in Wave 2 and 17% in Wave 1).

For those whose job involves working directly with children and families, the mean number of hours spent in a typical week directly working with children, families or carers was 10.3.

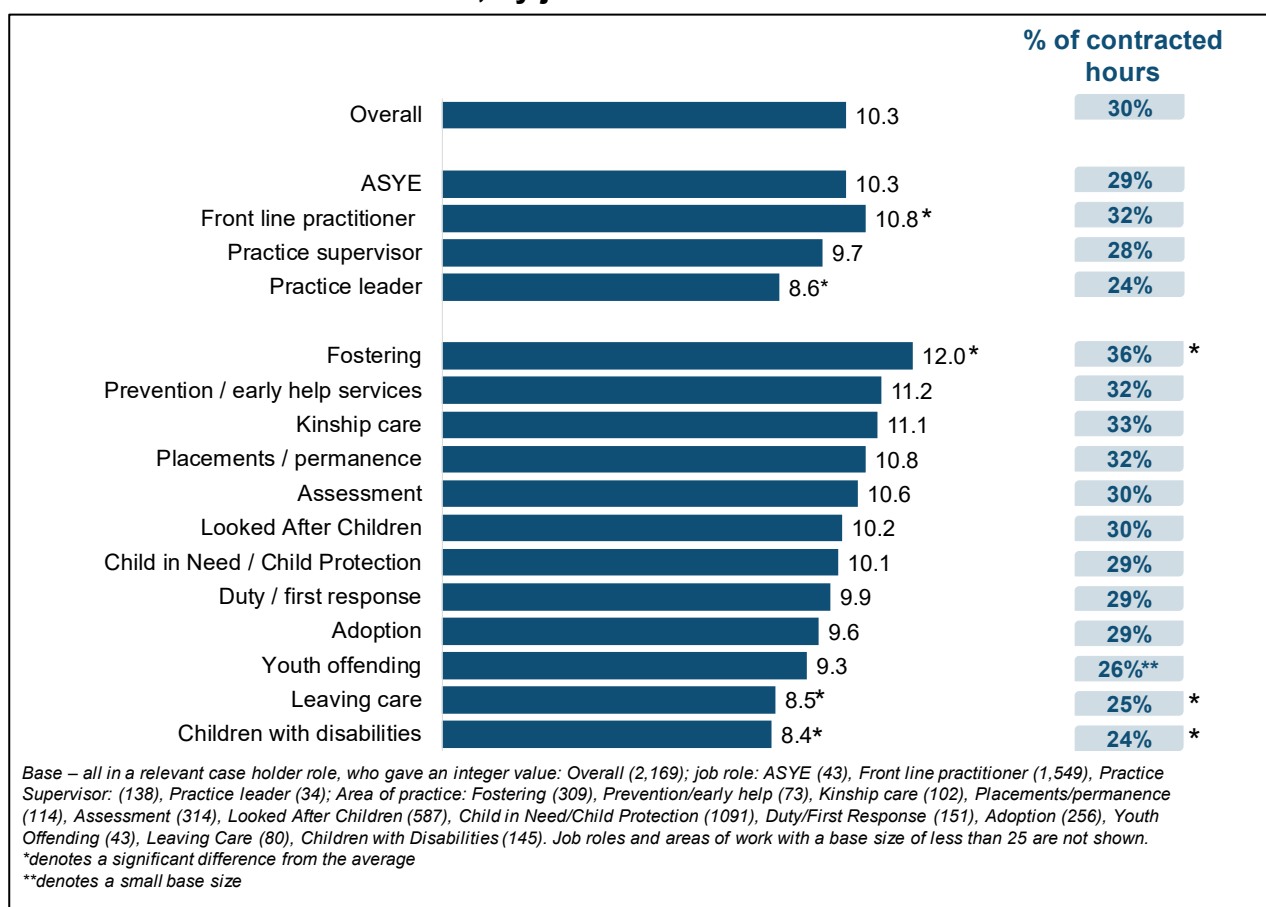
**Figure 3.1 Time spent working directly with children and families – mean number of hours in a typical week**



As shown in Figure 3.2, front line practitioners spent more time working directly with children and families compared to the overall average (10.8 hours compared to 10.3 hours). In terms of area of work, those working in Fostering spent on average 12 hours working directly with children and families, while those working in Leaving Care (8.5 hours) and Children with Disabilities (8.4 hours) spent significantly fewer hours than average working directly with children and families.

Those working in Fostering spent a significantly higher proportion of their contracted hours than average directly with children and families (36% compared with 30%). Conversely, the smallest proportion of time spent directly with children and families, as a proportion of contracted hours, was among those working with Children with Disabilities (24% of contracted hours) and Leaving Care (25% of contracted hours).

**Figure 3.2 Average number of hours per week spent working with children and families, by job role and area of work**



Supporting children and families was a key motivator for entering the profession, and evidence from the interviews suggests that where social workers did not feel they were able to spend sufficient direct time with children in particular, this could contribute towards them re-assessing their role and deciding to find a job with more direct contact time:

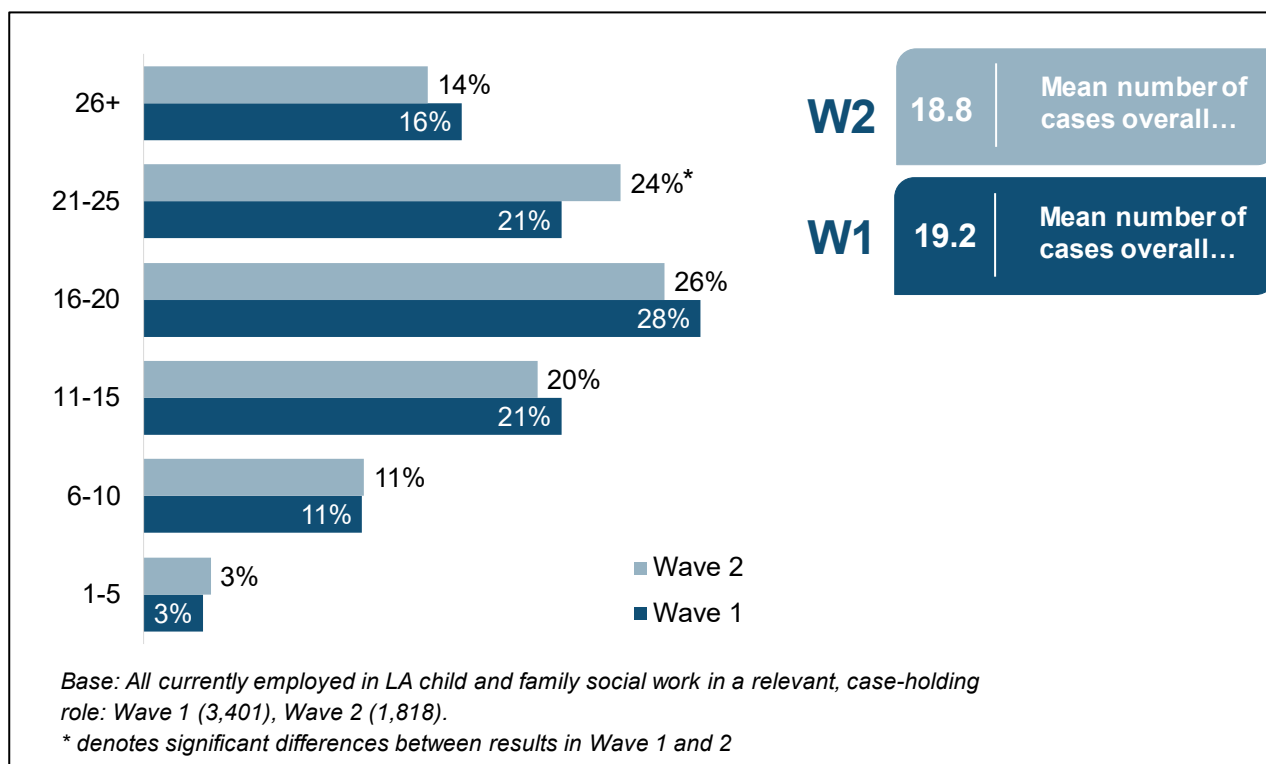
“I think it isn’t the job that I thought it would be. I currently work as a Looked After Children’s social worker and the job involves an awful lot of travelling, it involves an awful lot of bureaucracy and, actually, I do very little work with children and I came into this work because I love working with children. I just don’t work with children, I work with adults, I work with colleagues and families and that’s not what I wanted to do.”



## Caseloads

Social workers were asked how many cases they were currently allocated<sup>14</sup>. As shown in Figure 3.3, it was most common for those in relevant case holder roles to be responsible for 16-20 cases (26%) and overall half (50%) reported having 16-25 cases. The mean number of cases held overall was 18.8, consistent with the number at Wave 1 (19.2) and the number for those who completed both waves of the survey (18.9).

**Figure 3.3 Number of cases held**



The mean number of allocated cases varied by contracted hours and job role, as expected (Figure 3.4), but were overall consistent with Wave 1. Full-time social workers had a mean of 19.8 cases compared with 15.3 for part-time workers. Practice leaders reported the highest mean caseload<sup>15</sup>, with 24.6, and ASYE held the least, with 17.3, consistent with Wave 1.

In terms of practice area, social workers in Youth Offending and Fostering both had the lowest mean caseloads (15.5 for each) and Duty/First Response held the highest (20.5).

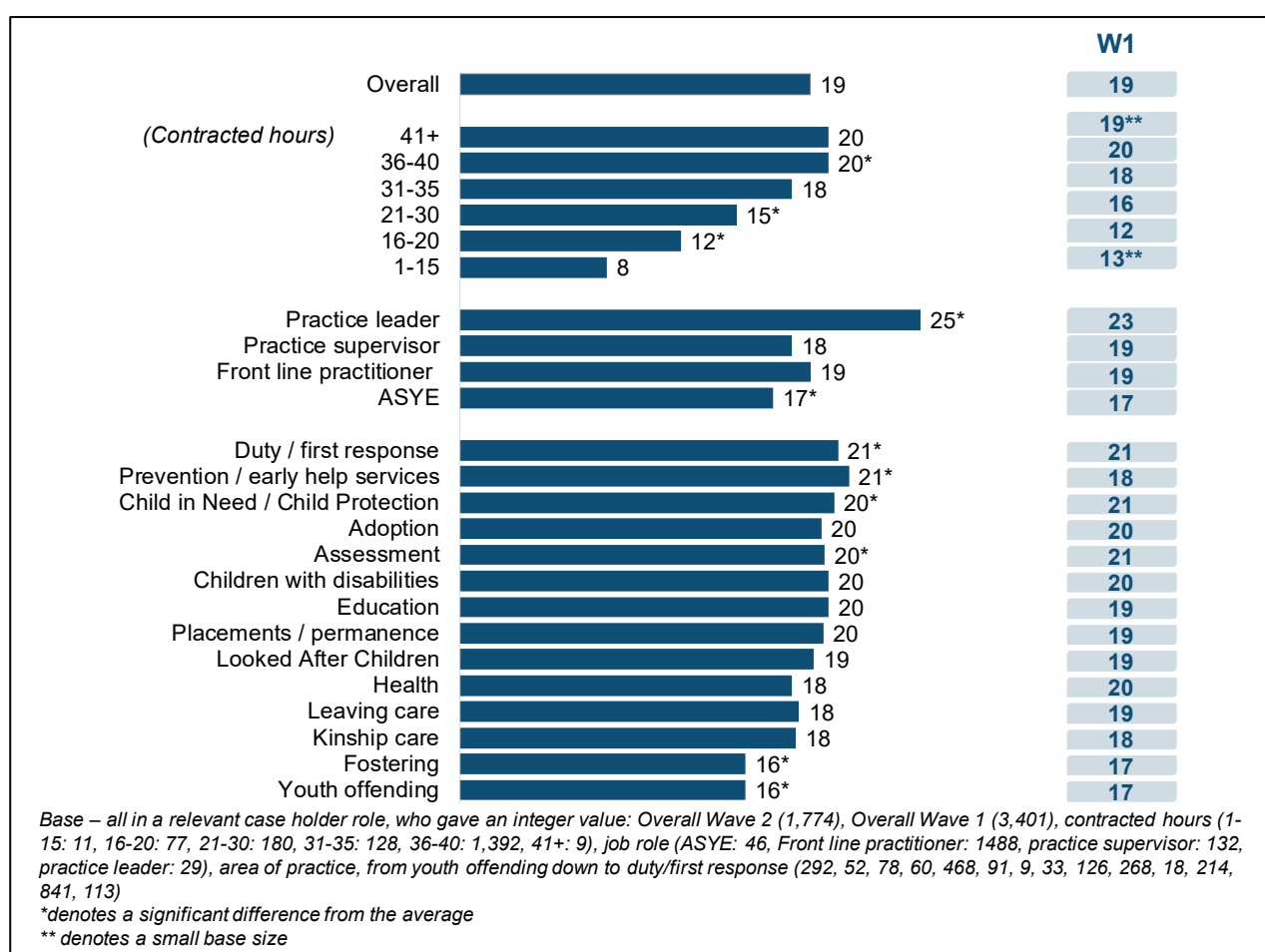
<sup>14</sup> Cases were defined as “an individual allocated to a social worker (for example a family of three siblings would be three individual cases) and/or a carer or carers allocated to a social worker for the purposes of foster or adoption.”

<sup>15</sup> Practice leaders are not typically case holders as they are at least Assistant Director level. Practice leaders indicating they have cases suggests the term is not widely understood and interpreted differently by different people.

Clearly, the number of cases that social workers are allocated at any point in time will vary depending on numerous factors including their contracted working hours, level of seniority/experience, practice area, wider staffing issues within their team (for example, if people are off sick or there are unfilled vacancies) and the complexity of the cases themselves. A lower mean number of cases might imply that the cases are more complex or require closer monitoring, for example.

Social workers in the North West reported the highest mean caseload (21.3), followed by those in Yorkshire and Humber (20.8). The East of England remained the region with the lowest reported mean caseload (16.2). Notably there were no significant differences according to the LA's Ofsted rating, other than social workers in authorities rated as 'requires improvement' having a higher mean caseload (19.3) than those in authorities rated as 'inadequate' (17.9). In fact, social workers in inadequate-rated authorities reported the lowest mean caseload across areas, which may be as a result of measures taken to improve their rating.

**Figure 3.4 Mean number of cases (rounded) by contracted hours, job role and area of practice**



In the qualitative interviews, social workers described the pressures that high or particularly complex caseloads exerted on their working hours and how having too high a caseload could contribute towards feelings that their workload was becoming

unmanageable. Some social workers working in Child Protection in particular singled out the amount of extra work involved in cases which were part of court proceedings:

“It’s relentless working in a Child Protection and court team. When I started I was really anxious about caseloads and the number of cases that I would have and what I’ve come to realise is that I could have 25 children on Child in Need and Child Protection plans and probably just keep my head above water, but if I had three families in care proceedings and no other work I would still be constantly drowning. I hadn’t realised that we would be writing assessments that take three days to write up, you know, a parenting assessment, I might do eight sessions with parents, and then need three, four days to write it up. When you’ve got a few of them at once it’s just impossible.”

## **Stress levels and workload demands**

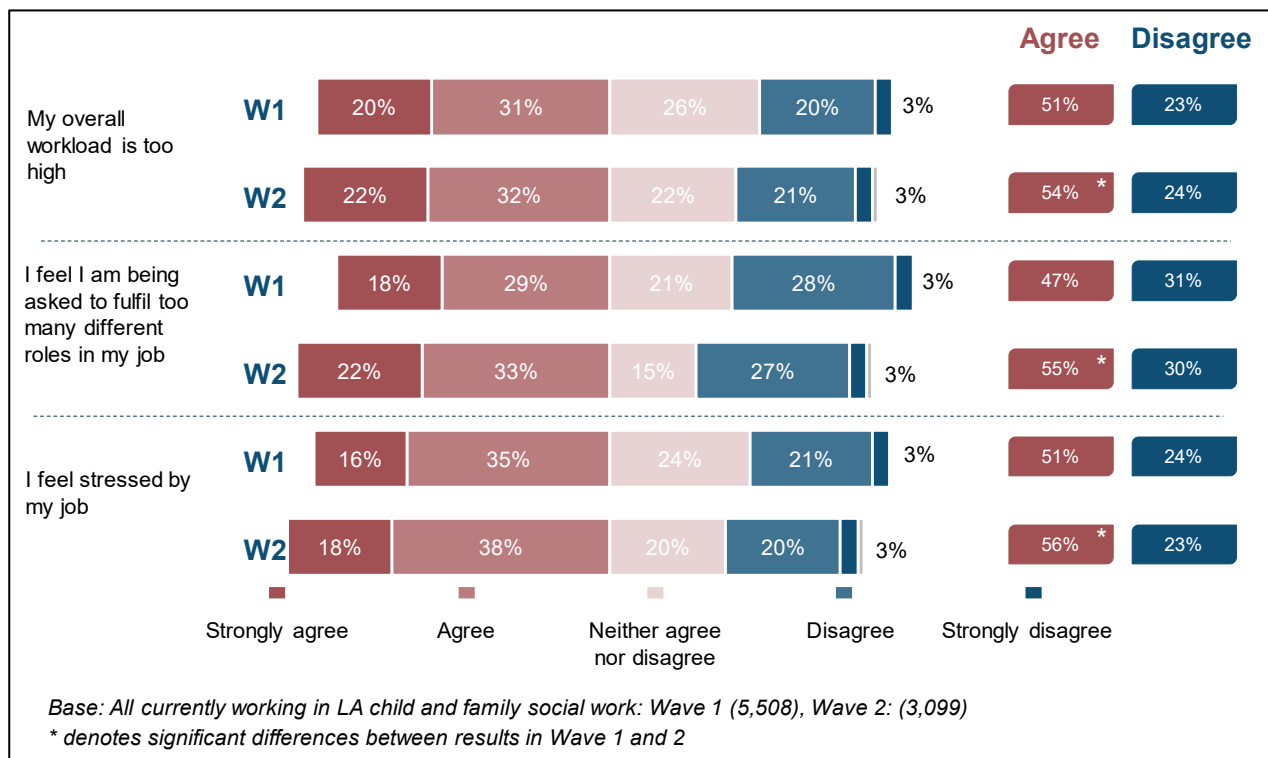
Social workers were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

- ‘I feel stressed by my job’;
- ‘My overall workload is too high’; and
- ‘I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job’.

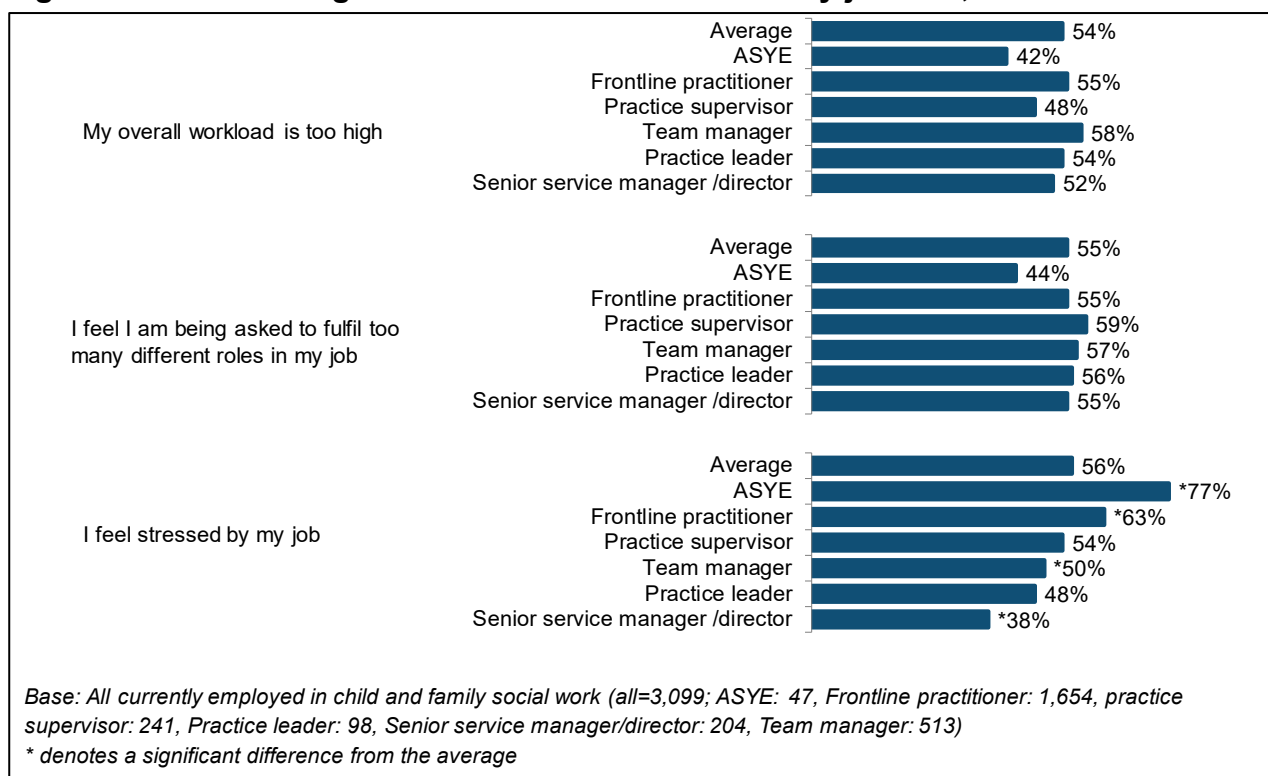
Figure 3.5 shows that more than half of social workers at Wave 2 agreed with each statement (ranging from 54% to 56%), and each of these is an increase compared with Wave 1. Further, measures for those local authority child and family social workers who completed the survey in both waves increased, showing they perceived their jobs as more difficult and more stressful at Wave 2 than in Wave 1.

Views on stress levels and workload demands varied by job role (Figure 3.6). Front line practitioners were more likely to agree with the statements about feeling stressed (63% compared with 56% average), including when compared with their senior colleagues, although there was no significant difference when it came to views on workload or being asked to fulfil too many roles in their job.

**Figure 3.5 Overall agreement levels regarding stress and workload demands**



**Figure 3.6 Levels of agreement with each statement by job role, Wave 2**



Looked After Children and Child in Need/Child Protection are the two practice areas where social workers were consistently more likely to agree that their workload was too high, that they were being asked to fulfil too many roles and they felt stressed by their job (Table 3.2). There is an increased trend in children's services to segment social work responsibilities related to Tier 3 and Tier 4 casework to Looked After Children and Child Protection teams, and this may explain why these types of social workers feel they are fulfilling too many roles. Despite having higher than average caseloads, those working in the Duty/First response/Front door/MASH service area, and those working in Prevention/Early Help were less likely to agree with all three statements.

**Table 3.2 Agreement with having too high a workload, fulfilling too many roles, and feeling stressed, by main practice area**

*Red shading denotes a finding significantly higher than the average; green shading denotes a finding significantly lower than the average (at 95% Confidence Interval).*

	Avg.	Children with disabilities	Placements / permanence	Leaving care	Youth offending	Duty / first response/ MASH	Health	Education	Adoption	Fostering	Assessment	Child in Need	Looked After Children	Prevention / early help	Kinship care
Overall workload too high	54%	56%	58%	57%	48%	41%	48%	47%	55%	50%	49%	57%	61%	39%	50%
Asked to fulfil too many roles	55%	56%	64%	67%	61%	44%	48%	51%	57%	56%	52%	59%	60%	50%	55%
Feel stressed by job	56%	57%	56%	54%	50%	44%	51%	51%	56%	49%	58%	62%	63%	37%	47%
Base	3,099	250	184	155	75	291	41	30	381	460	445	1,470	873	152	163

## Having too high a workload

High workload is linked with the Ofsted rating of the service, social worker satisfaction levels and their future outlook. Social workers in 'outstanding' and 'good' rated local authorities were less likely to agree they had too a high workload (48% and 51%) compared with those in services rated as 'requires improvement' (59%). This is compared with an overall average of 54% of local authority child and family social workers reporting that their workload is too high.

Social workers dissatisfied in their job were more likely to agree their workload is too high (74%) compared with those who are satisfied (48%). Linked to this, those considering leaving the profession in the next 12 months were also more likely to agree their workload is too high (67%) compared with social workers planning to remain in the profession (53%).

## Fulfilling too many job roles

Feeling like one is being asked to fulfil too many roles is linked with the Ofsted rating of the service: social workers in 'outstanding' rated services were less likely to agree that they are asked to fulfil too many roles (49%) compared with social workers in services rated as 'requires improvement' (59%). This compares with an overall average of 55% believing they are being asked to fulfil too many roles.

Social workers with a physical or mental health condition were more likely to agree that they are asked to fulfil too many roles (61%) compared with their counterparts without a condition (53%). Those with any caring responsibility were also more likely than other social workers to agree they are asked to fulfil too many roles (57% compared with 52%, respectively).

Social workers dissatisfied with their job were much more likely (76%) than those who were satisfied (48%) to feel they are asked to fulfil too many roles. It is thus less surprising that those who agreed that they were asked to fulfil too many roles were more likely to expect to have left child and family social work in 12 months' time than those who disagreed (13% compared with seven per cent).

## Feeling stressed by their job

Feeling stressed is also related to the Ofsted rating of the service: social workers' self-reported stress increased as the Ofsted rating declined. For example, 48% of social workers in 'outstanding' rated authorities agreed they felt stressed compared with 55% at 'good' authorities, 59% at those rated as 'requires improvement' and '61% at 'inadequate' authorities. This compares with 56% of all local authority child and family social workers reported feeling stressed by their job.

Social workers with a physical or mental health condition, those who were dissatisfied with their job and those who were considering leaving the profession were also more likely to agree they felt stressed. Two-thirds (65%) of social workers with a physical or mental health condition agreed they feel stressed compared with 54% of social workers without a condition. Four-fifths of social workers dissatisfied with their job felt stressed (82%) compared with half of social workers who were satisfied (49%). More than four-fifths (84%) of social workers thinking of leaving local authority child and family social work felt stressed.

One-quarter of social workers who reported they were not stressed by their job at Wave 1 felt stressed at Wave 2 (25%). Three-quarters (76%) of the social workers who felt stressed, reported feeling stressed in both waves, and these were also more likely to be front line practitioners (65%) or working in Children in Need and Child Protection (54%).

Social workers who disagreed that they felt stressed by their job were more likely:

- to be working for outstanding-rated LAs (30%, compared with 20% of those in LAs rated as 'requires improvement' and 23% in LAs rated 'inadequate');
- to be older, for example 37% of those aged 65 or older, and 28% of those aged 45 to 54, compared with 19% of those aged 25 to 34); and
- to be working in more senior job roles (33% of practice leaders and 31% of senior service managers, compared with 19% of front line practitioners).

## Reasons for feeling stressed

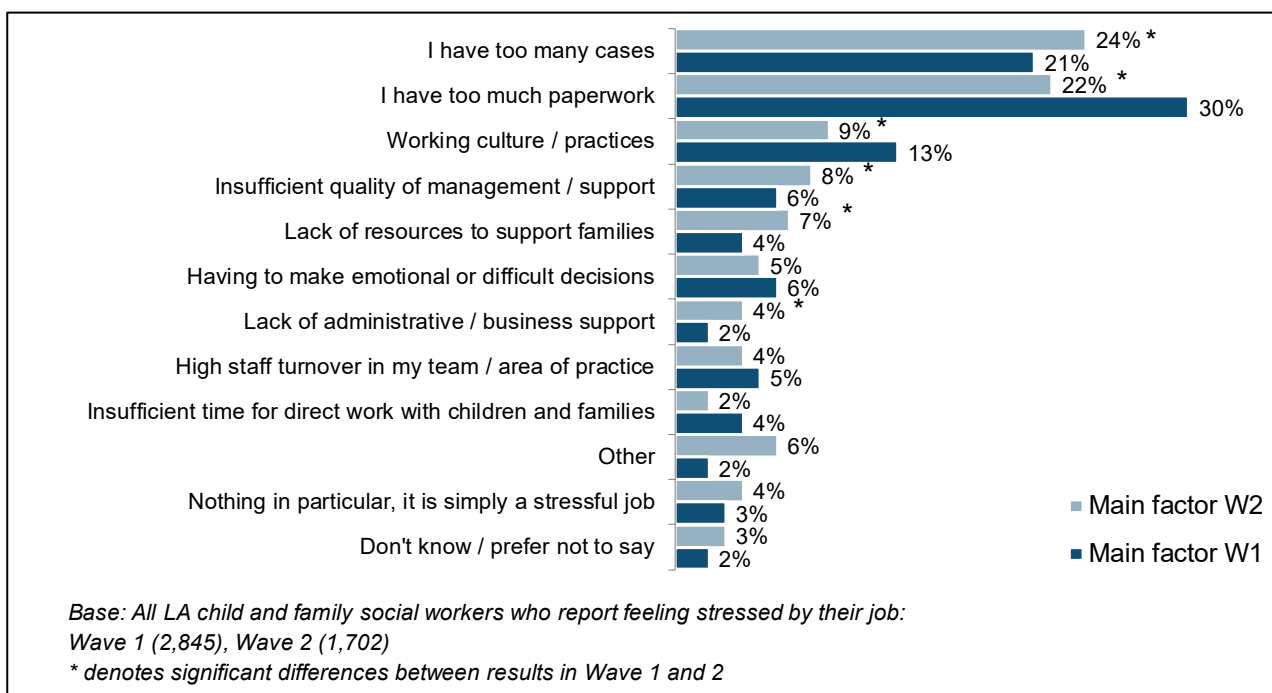
Those who agreed with the statement, 'I feel stressed by my work' were asked what factors they felt were causing this stress, and to identify the main factor, if there was more than one.

Having too high a caseload was the main reported reason for feeling stressed at Wave 2 (24%, up from 21% in Wave 1), overtaking having too much paperwork (22%, down from 30% in Wave 1) (Figure 3.7).

When looking at all reasons (rather than the one main reason for feeling stressed), concerns among front line practitioners remain distinct from others and relate to completing their day-to-day roles (Table 3.3).



**Figure 3.7 Main reported reason for feeling stressed, Wave 2 compared with Wave 1**



Specifically they were more likely to report that feeling stressed by their work was caused by having too much paperwork (58% compared with 55% average), too many cases (51% compared with 45% average), insufficient time with families (39% compared with 30% average) and having to make difficult or emotional decisions (22% compared with 20% average). In contrast, those in more strategic roles continued to cite concerns related to the lack of administrative support in these roles (mentioned by 51% of Practice Leaders who felt stressed, and 46% of Senior Service Managers, compared with 29% average).

The qualitative interviews highlighted the importance of wider support from the line manager, supervisor and wider team in helping people to talk through cases and deal with the emotional burden of the role, in particular through reflective supervision. However, when time was pressured some social workers felt this became more of a 'tick-box' exercise, and considered that true reflective supervision needed to be embedded throughout practice, from the senior leadership team down:

"I think in terms of the opportunity to have proper reflective supervision, to actually think about things, rather than it being a checklist of, 'Right, what have you done on this case? What are you doing next?' It's thinking about, okay, how does that make you feel, what do you think you could have done differently, all of those sorts of things to actually learn and develop yourself as a social worker. That didn't really happen in [previous LA]. And partly because it felt like the caseloads were very high, you've got to talk about these statutory caseloads, the Child Protection cases. And if you've got lots of those, it doesn't really leave room for very much

else. But that's seen to be something that didn't necessarily come down from the senior management team, it wasn't embedded through our practice."

**Table 3.3 All reasons for feeling stressed by their job, by role (Wave 2)**

*For each stress factor, red shading denotes a finding significantly higher than the average across all job roles (grey shading) and green shading denotes a finding significantly lower than the average.*

Stress factor	Avg.	ASYE	Front line	Practice supervisor	Team manager	Practice leader	Senior service manager /director
Too much paperwork	55%	55%	58%	60%	49%	42%	44%
Too many cases	45%	28%	51%	42%	36%	34%	15%
Lack of resources to support families	35%	40%	37%	33%	39%	24%	22%
Insufficient time for direct work with children and families	30%	51%	39%	28%	7%	16%	2%
Working culture / practices	30%	25%	28%	36%	36%	32%	39%
Lack of administrative / business support	29%	22%	26%	28%	31%	51%	46%
High staff turnover	25%	42%	25%	27%	25%	18%	25%
Insufficient quality of management / support	24%	27%	23%	27%	25%	26%	29%
Having to make emotional or difficult decisions	20%	33%	22%	15%	18%	13%	13%
Other	12%	9%	11%	13%	14%	6%	13%
Nothing in particular, simply a stressful job	5%	0%	5%	5%	4%	5%	11%
Base	1,702	32	1,030	127	245	43	78

## Manager consideration of work-life balance

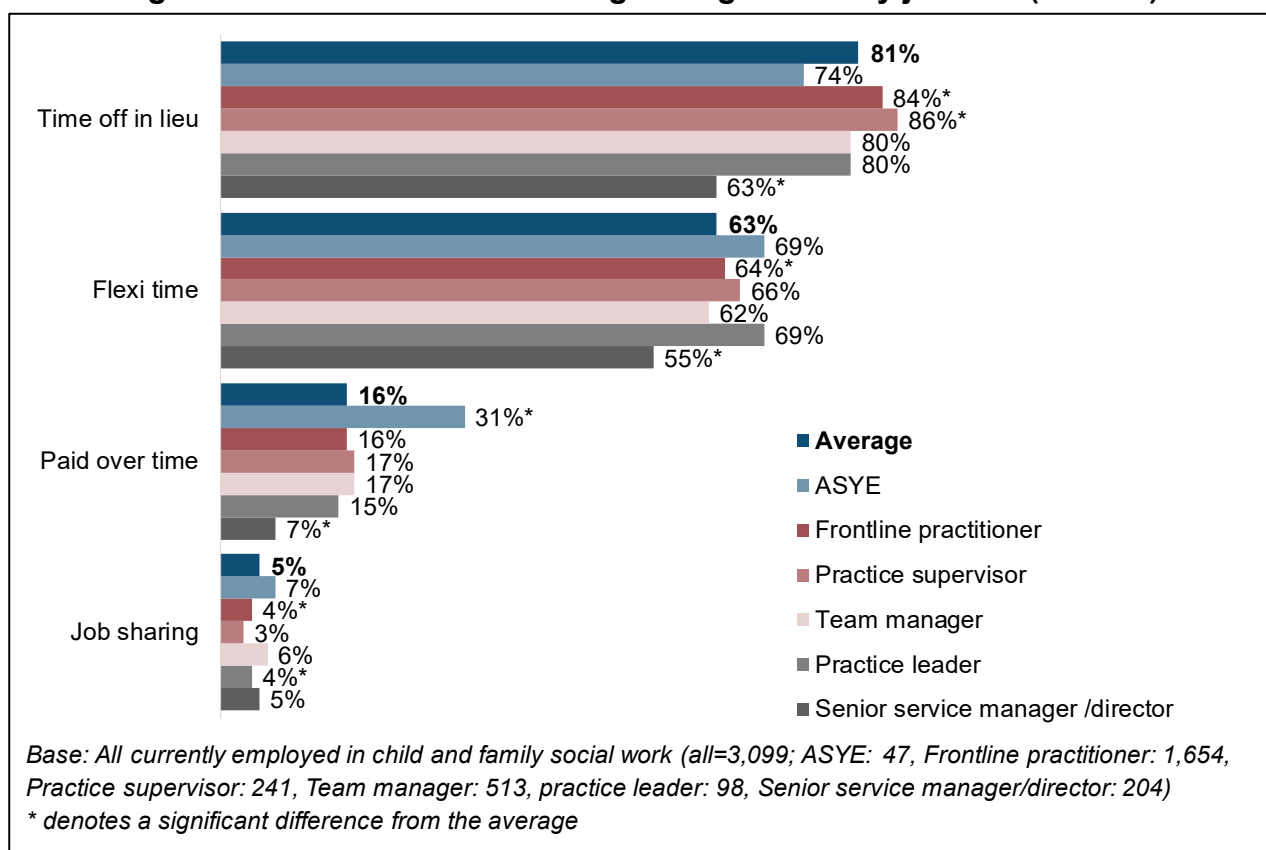
Despite the high proportion of social workers who were working more than their contracted hours, three-quarters (76%) agreed that 'my manager is considerate of my life outside work', while 13% were neutral and 11% disagreed, consistent with Wave 1. People with caring responsibilities remained more likely to agree (79% compared with 75% of those without caring responsibilities).

## Use of various flexible working arrangements

Social workers were also asked about whether they had made use of flexible working arrangements at their current employer, specifically time off in lieu (TOIL), flexi-time, paid overtime and job-sharing (Figure 3.8).

Time off in lieu was still the most common arrangement that social workers used (81%, unchanged from Wave 1), followed by flexi-time (63% compared with 58% at Wave 1). Far fewer social workers received paid overtime (16%, compared with 15% at Wave 1) or used job-sharing arrangements (5%, unchanged from Wave 1).

**Figure 3.8 Use of flexible working arrangements by job role (Wave 2)**



Social workers employed by local authorities in the North East were more likely to use flexi-time (91% compared with 63% average). This region was also the least likely to use TOIL (53% compared with 81% average), suggesting that the local authorities which originally took part in the research had a preferred approach to flexible working arrangements. Front line practitioners with pre-school aged children were most likely to use flexi-time (72% compared with 63% average).

Social workers who were still doing their ASYE at Wave 2 were twice as likely to receive paid overtime (31% compared with 16% average), and much more likely to receive paid overtime compared with other roles (front line practitioner 16%, Practice supervisor 15%,

Practice leader 15%). This may be because ASYEs have protected workloads and to go above this requires compensation, or it may relate to the specific policies of the local authorities where these ASYEs were employed. It is worth pointing out that the base size of people who are still doing their ASYE in this wave is relatively small.

## 4. Social workers' views on their employer, line manager and working environment

In order to fully understand the work experiences of social workers, the survey explored how they felt about various aspects of their working life. This chapter explores: social workers' feelings of loyalty to and being valued by their employer; relationship with their managers; experiences of receiving and providing reflective supervision; access to learning and development opportunities, involvement in NAAS, and views on the resources at their disposal and their working environment.

The key findings are:

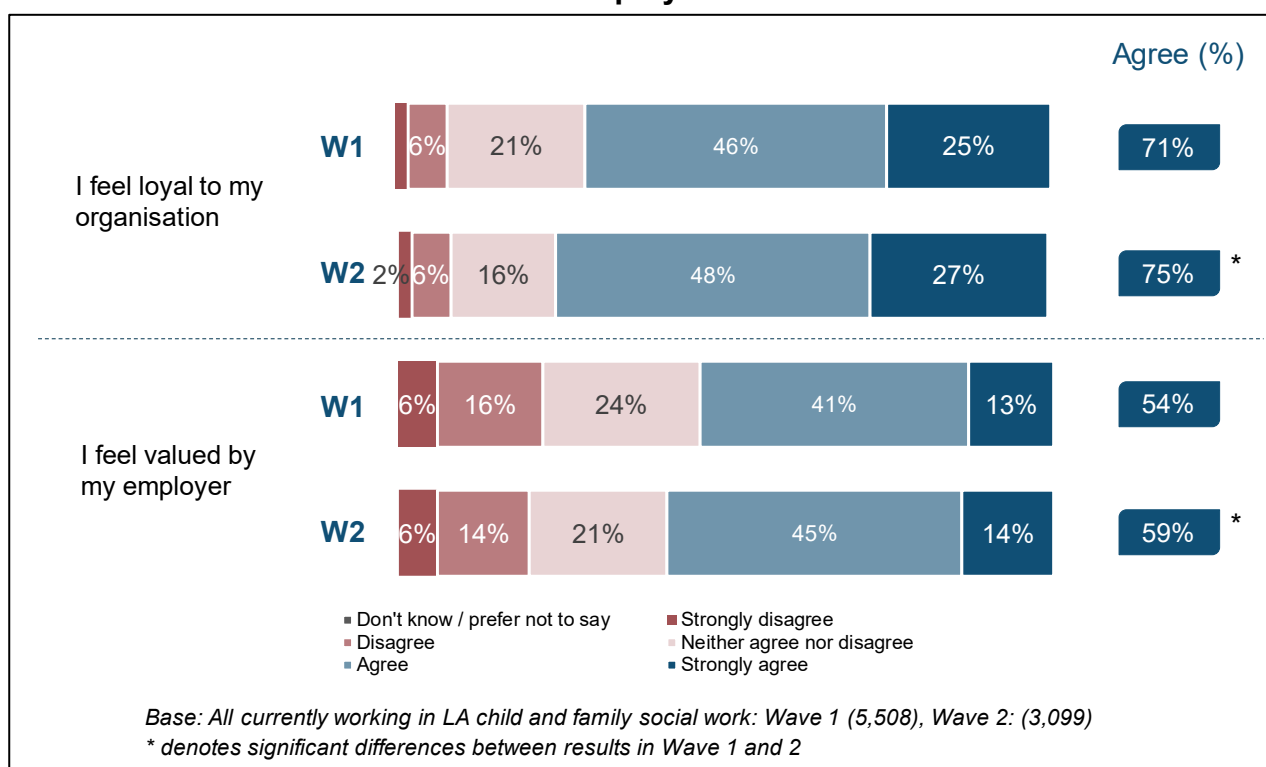
- Feelings of loyalty and being valued have increased since Wave 1; three in four (75%) feel loyal compared with 71% in Wave 1, and six in ten (59%) feel valued, compared with 54% in Wave 1. However, when comparing Wave 1 findings for those who took part in the survey and were in child and family social work in both waves, findings are consistent; the aggregate change is driven by the more negative views of those who only completed the Wave 1 survey.
- Views about line management were typically positive, particularly for feeling that managers were open to ideas (82% agreed) and managers recognising a job well done (81% agreed). Front line practitioners were typically less positive about their line managers than those in more senior positions.
- As seen in Wave 1, social workers were less positive about their work environment and tools at their disposal than they were their employer and their line manager.
- The frequency of receiving reflective supervision has fallen since Wave 1, with more social workers receiving it less than six-weekly (23% in Wave 2 compared with 17% in Wave 1) or never having received it at their current employer (12% compared to nine per cent in Wave 1). This is primarily driven by those who were on their ASYE in Wave 1 moving into more senior roles (predominantly front line practitioner roles) where reflective supervision became less frequent; over one quarter (27%) of ASYEs in Wave 1 received supervision at least once every two weeks, while only five per cent of those who were promoted from ASYE between waves received it this frequently.
- The proportion who provide reflective supervision has increased slightly in Wave 2 (from 25% to 27%), reflecting the increase in social workers in senior positions in Wave 2. As in Wave 1, the vast majority (97%) were confident in providing supervision.
- The majority (89%) of social workers had undertaken employer-supported learning or CPD within the past 12 months. Seven in ten (69%) agreed that they were able to access the right learning and development opportunities.

- A small number of Wave 2 social workers had been involved in NAAS which is to be expected given that at the time of the Wave 2 survey, NAAS was only operating in a proportion of LAs. Eight per cent had been assessed through the framework and seven per cent had been endorsed but not yet assessed.

## Feeling valued by and loyal to their employer

Local authority child and family social workers were asked about their loyalty to, and the extent to which they felt valued by, their employer. As shown by Figure 4.1, loyalty was high in Wave 2 (75% agreed they were loyal) and significantly higher compared with Wave 1 (71% agreed), while only a minority disagreed that they felt valued in each Wave (8% in both). Although fewer social workers felt valued by their employer, the majority still agreed (59%), an increase on Wave 1 (54%). The proportion of social workers who did not feel valued by their employer declined from 22% in Wave 1 to 20% in Wave 2.

**Figure 4.1 Social workers' perceptions of loyalty to and feeling valued by their employer**

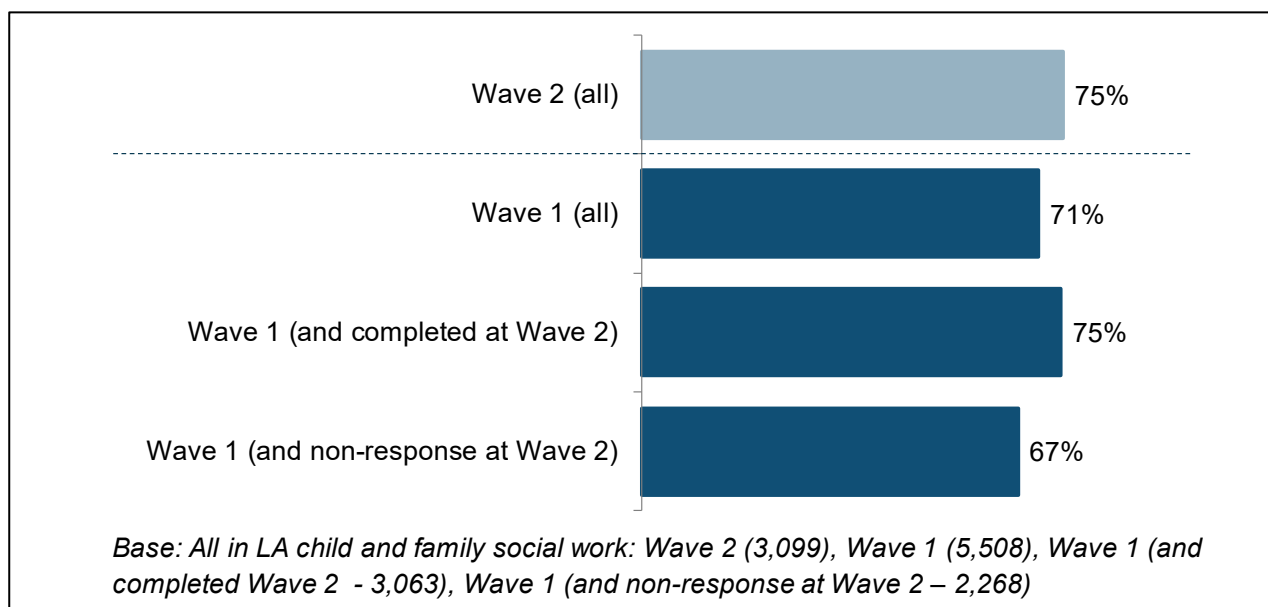


The increase in the proportion of social workers feeling loyal and valued between waves is primarily attributable to fewer of those who felt negatively about their employer in Wave 1 completing the Wave 2 survey. As Figure 4.2 shows, when looking only at the social workers who completed both surveys, findings are consistent across waves (75% in both). Those who completed in Wave 1 and did not complete in Wave 2 were considerably less positive (67%), driving the overall Wave 1 proportion down (to 71%)

and therefore meaning the difference between Wave 2 and Wave 1 is significant at an overall level (75% compared with 71%). The same pattern is evident in terms of feeling valued by employers. This indicates that social workers who remained in the sample are fairly consistent in their views of feeling loyal and valued, between the two waves of the survey.

Those who left local authority child and family social work between Wave 1 and Wave 2 were less likely to feel valued or loyal to their employer in Wave 1; only just over half (52%) reported feeling loyal, compared with 71% on average, and only 43% felt valued, compared with 54% on average.

**Figure 4.2 Proportion of social workers who agreed they felt loyal to their employer - Wave 2 (all), Wave 1 (all), Wave 1 (completed both waves), Wave 1 (non-response at Wave 2)**



Social workers who have been promoted between waves felt both more loyal to and more valued by their employer: 82% who were promoted agreed that they felt loyal to their organisation, compared with 75% who remained in the same role, while 65% of those who had been promoted said they felt valued by their employer compared with 57% in the same role.

Similarly, social workers who had completed employer-supported CPD in the previous 12 months were also more likely to feel valued and loyal compared with the minority who had not: 77% of these felt loyal (compared with 61% who had done no CPD) and 61% felt valued (compared with 44%).

Many of the same differences that were apparent in Wave 1 were apparent in Wave 2. As with Wave 1, the amount of time social workers had been employed at their organisation had a positive effect on feeling loyal to their employer, but a negative effect

on feeling valued by that employer. Three in five (62%) who had been at their employer for less than one year agreed that they felt loyal, rising to three quarters (75%) of those at their employer for between two and five years, and four in five (80%) for those at the employer for six years or longer. Conversely, those who had been with their employer for less than 10 years were significantly more likely to feel valued than those who had been there for more than 10 years (60% compared with 55%).

In line with the finding that promoted employees felt more loyal and more valued, those in more senior positions also felt more positive about these aspects than front line practitioners. Slightly more than half (54%) of front line practitioners agreed that they felt valued, compared with 69% of practice leaders, 68% of team managers and 77% of senior managers and directors. On the other hand, one-quarter (24%) of front line practitioners disagreed that they felt valued, compared with 14% of practice leaders and team managers and 13% of senior managers and directors. Similarly, seven in ten (71%) front line practitioners felt loyal, compared with at least eight in ten in more senior positions (81% of practice supervisors, 83% of practice leaders, 85% of team managers and 88% of senior service managers).

The link between loyalty, feeling valued and job satisfaction identified in Wave 1 persisted in Wave 2. Over four in five (83%) of those who felt satisfied with their jobs at Wave 2 felt loyal and seven in ten (70%) felt valued, compared with just 45% and 22% respectively for those dissatisfied with their current jobs in child and family social work.

Other differences that echoed the Wave 1 findings include:

- those working at a local authority with an 'inadequate' Ofsted rating remained less likely than other local authorities to feel loyal (68% compared with 74% 'requires improvement', 76% 'good' and 86% 'outstanding') or valued (43% compared with 57% 'requires improvement', 63% 'good' and 72% 'outstanding'); and
- those with a physical or mental health condition were less likely than those without such a condition to feel loyal (72% compared with 76%) or valued (53% compared with 61%).

In the qualitative interviews, feeling valued was identified as an important motivator and sign of recognition, but one that could be strongly influenced by the relationship with the line manager (discussed in greater detail in the next section).

## **Views about line management**

Child and family social workers were asked about various aspects of their relationship with their line manager(s) and as shown in Figure 4.3, they were typically positive about this relationship. They were most positive about their manager being receptive to their ideas (82% agreed) and their manager recognising when they had done a good job (81%

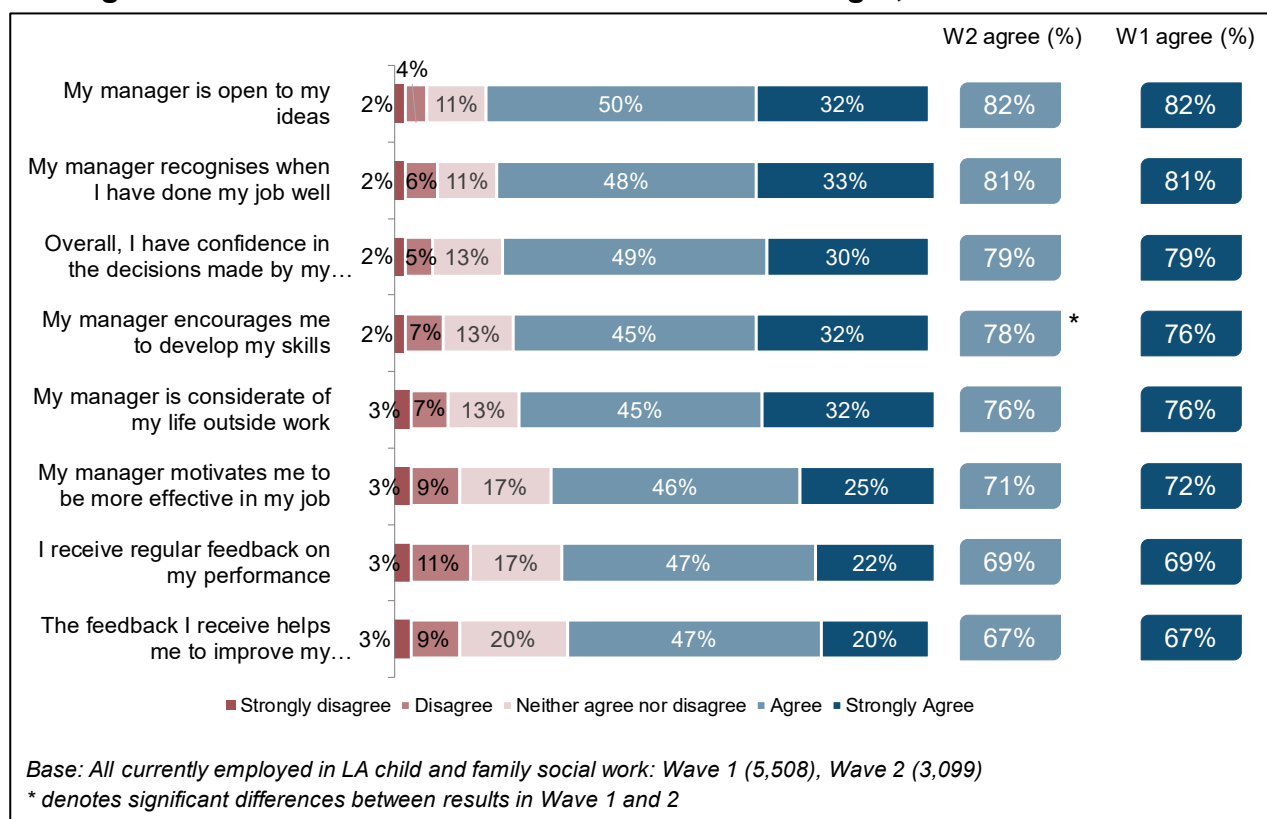


agreed); similar proportions also agreed that they have confidence in the decisions made by their manager (79%) and that their manager encourages them to develop their skills (78%). Although still in the majority, social workers were less positive about the feedback they received from line managers, both in regard to how regular it was (69% agreed) and the extent to which they felt it improved their performance (67%).

Also evident in Figure 4.3 is the consistency of results between Wave 1 and Wave 2. All measures were consistent between waves, except 'my manager encourages me to develop my skills', which has increased since Wave 1. As with views on loyalty and feeling valued, the increase is due to the absence of more negative responders in Wave 2: when Wave 1 data is rebased to include only those completing in both waves, 79% were positive about being encouraged to develop their skills. However, only 73% of Wave 2 non-responders were positive, bringing the overall Wave 1 figure down to 76%, significantly lower than Wave 2.

Those who had been with the same employer in both waves of the survey were typically more positive about their line manager than those who had moved local authority between waves. Four in five (79%) who were still at the same employer thought their manager encouraged them to develop their skills, compared with 68% who had moved to a different local authority. Similarly, 77% of those still with the same employer felt their manager was considerate of their life outside of work, compared with 70% who had moved. This indicates that relationship-building between line managers and reportees takes some time. Whether or not social workers had moved local authority between waves did not affect views on frequency or quality of feedback.

**Figure 4.3 Social workers' views on their line manager, Wave 2 and Wave 1**



While views about line management were broadly consistent across job role, front line practitioners were slightly less positive than others about their managers' ability to motivate them to do their job effectively (69% agreed compared with 71% on average) and their manager being open to their ideas (8% disagreed, compared with six per cent on average).

Interestingly, those who were employed by an agency were more positive about the feedback received from line management than those employed directly by a local authority, both in terms of frequency and the quality of feedback. Three-quarters of agency staff felt that they received regular feedback (76%) and that it helped them to improve their performance (74%), compared with 68% and 66% respectively for those directly employed by a local authority.

Consistent with other attitudinal measures that contribute to feelings of job satisfaction and workplace wellbeing, there was typically a positive correlation between views on line-management and Ofsted rating. For example, confidence in managers' decisions was higher for those employed at an 'outstanding' (84% agreed) or 'good' (81%) rated local authority than for those at an 'inadequate' rated authority (74% agreed). A similar pattern was evident in terms of encouragement to develop skills; consideration of reportees' lives outside of work and feedback helping to improve performance.

Views about line managers also differed according to ethnicity. Social workers from an Asian or Black ethnic background were more positive about their line managers' ability to motivate them (85% for Asian, 80% for Black, compared with 71% overall) and the extent to which feedback had helped them to improve their performance (78% for Asian, 79% for Black, compared with 67% overall). Further, Asian social workers had more confidence in managers' decisions than others (88% compared with 79% on average) and felt their managers recognised a job well done (93% compared with 81% on average). Black social workers were more likely to agree that they received regular feedback on their performance (76% compared with 69% on average). White British social workers were more positive about their line managers' consideration of their lives outside of work and openness to their ideas. The positive ratings amongst black social workers can be linked to the positive ratings for these attributes amongst agency workers; black social workers were far more likely to be employed by an agency than social workers from any other ethnic background (44% were employed by an agency compared with 15% overall).

The findings by ethnicity are linked with variations by local authority Ofsted rating. Asian social workers (43%) were more likely than 'White British' or 'Mixed' social workers to work at a 'good' local authority (43%, compared with 33% 'White British' and 29% 'Mixed'). Further, 49% of Black and 46% of Asian social workers in Wave 2 worked in Greater London, where almost two-thirds of local authorities were rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' (65%) compared with 47% on average across the rest of England.

The qualitative interviews showed how important a supportive line manager could be in terms of handling workload pressures, especially if this was reinforced by the wider ethos and culture of the department, instilled by the leadership team:

"I think you felt like you got a manager that was actually, you know, keeping the team together, keeping them moving, recognising that we needed to be working as a team and supporting each other. But also, that leadership of actually having somebody there who was available, who would make that time for everybody, and would protect you as well with things. So, if there were issues, you felt like they would take them up the ladder. Whether you could do something about them or not, at least your voice was heard."

Social workers spoke of variability between managers, but also fluctuations depending on their line managers' own stress levels. For example, one social worker described how feeling valued and supported was affected by the approachability of their manager and how much time they were able to spend on supervision, both of which varied according to how busy and stressed they were:

"There's periods when I've felt that I'm contributing, and I'm valued, and I get some positive feedback. I think there's certainly been long periods of time where our manager has struggled with her stress levels from the job and we have very

difficult periods where there isn't much in the way of supervision and she can be quite snappy and you, sort of, tiptoe round her and you don't bring things to her. In those periods then there's definitely points where I've felt very undervalued, so I guess it fluctuates."

## **Views on working environment, resources and learning opportunities**

Social workers in LA child and family social work were asked about their work environment and the tools and resources at their disposal.<sup>16</sup>

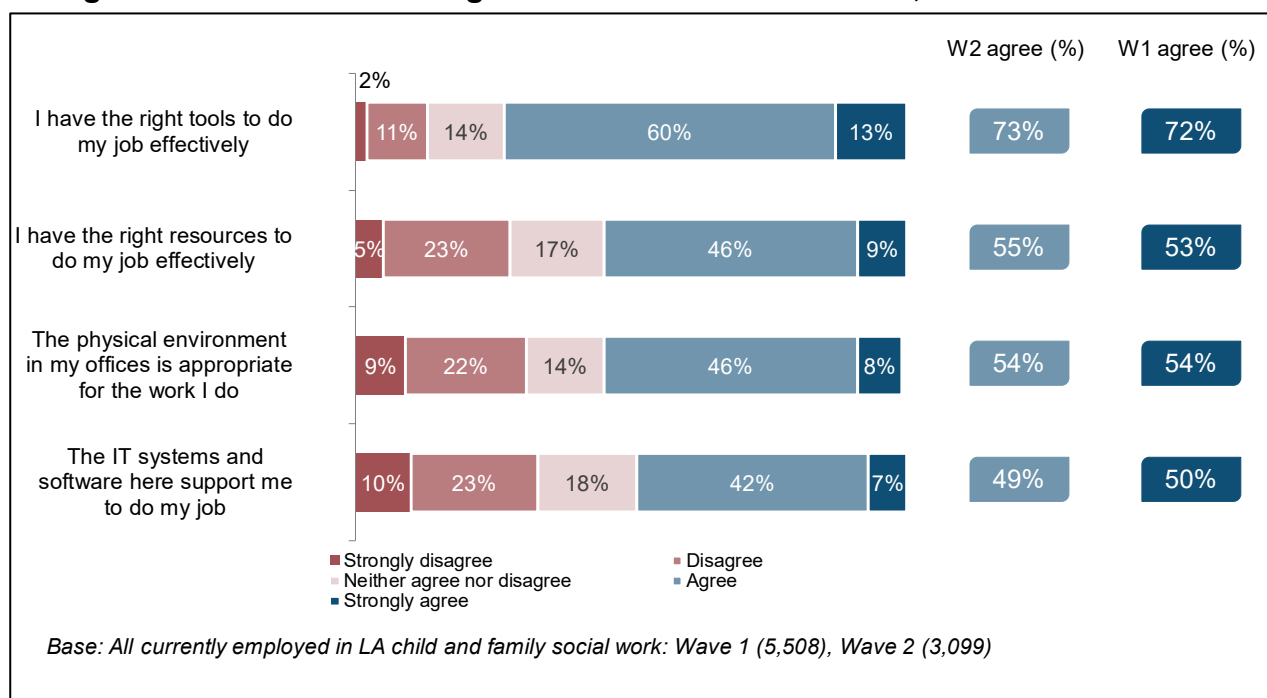
As with Wave 1, social workers viewed these aspects of their job less positively than they viewed their line manager and access to learning and development (Figure 4.4). Although almost three-quarters (73%) agreed that they had the right tools to do their jobs effectively, only around half agreed that: they had the right resources to do their jobs effectively (55%); the physical environment in their office was appropriate for their work (54%), and; the IT systems and software supported them to do their jobs (49%). These measures are consistent both with overall Wave 1 findings and Wave 1 findings for those who completed the survey across both waves.

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<sup>16</sup> In the survey, social workers were asked separately about their views on the tools and resources available to them at their local authority. Tools were in reference to things that are designed to enable social workers to carry out an action specific to their jobs, for example, risk assessment tools and planning tools, whereas resources were things that they can access that assist them in their day to day jobs, such as petty cash.

<sup>17</sup> In the Wave 2 survey, reflective supervision was defined as: a learning process that allows the practitioner to explore the factors influencing their practice, including emotions, assumptions and power relationships; develop an understanding of the knowledge base informing their practice and its limits; and, to identify next steps.

**Figure 4.4 Views on working environment and resources, Wave 2 and Wave 1**



Those who were on the ASYE in Wave 1 and had since moved into a more senior position, almost all becoming fully-fledged front line social workers, were more likely than other social workers to disagree that they had the right tools to do their job effectively (20% of those who had moved from ASYE in Wave 1 disagreed, compared with 13% of others).

Social workers who were relatively new to their employer, having worked there for less than one year, were less likely than those who had been at the employer for a longer period of time to agree that they had access to the right tools to do their jobs effectively (67% compared with 73% on average).

Front line social workers were consistently less positive about their working environment and resources at their disposal than average, and particularly when compared with team managers and senior service directors, who were consistently the most positive about these aspects of their jobs. For example, 69% of front line social workers agreed that they have the right tools to do their job, compared with 79% of team managers and 84% of senior service managers or directors. This indicates that those in case holding roles felt less equipped to do their jobs than those in non-case holding roles. As some of the tools and resources used differ across these roles, this suggests either the resources exclusively used by front line social workers jobs are lacking, or they are not as appropriate for use in this type of role.

Social workers with a physical or mental health condition were less positive than those with such conditions across all measures. In particular, those with a health condition were less likely to agree that their physical working environment was appropriate (45% compared with 56%) or that they had the right resources to do their jobs properly (45%

compared with 57%). This may indicate that there is more to be done by local authorities to ensure that working environments and other resources are suitably adapted for people with physical or mental health conditions.

Consistent with Wave 1, the following groups were consistently more positive:

- those satisfied with their jobs overall. For example: six in ten (61%) who were satisfied with their job thought they had the right resources to do the job effectively, compared with three in ten (31%) who were dissatisfied. Similarly, 59% who were satisfied with their job agreed that their physical working environment was appropriate, compared with 34% who were dissatisfied;
- social workers who had undertaken employer supported CPD in the preceding 12 months. This was particularly stark in terms of whether social workers felt they had the tools to do their jobs properly (75% who had done training/CPD agreed, compared with only 59% of those who had not). This is perhaps to be expected as some training and CPD might relate to the use of tools which help social workers do their jobs. Having undertaken training/CPD or not had no effect on views about the adequacy of IT systems, however; and
- social workers in LAs with 'outstanding' or 'good' Ofsted ratings. An example is views on IT systems, with 58% at 'outstanding' LAs agreeing these were suitable, falling to 51% at a 'good' LA, 49% at those in LAs which 'require improvement' and just 36% in LAs judged as 'inadequate'. The exception to this was views on the physical working environment, which were consistent across all Ofsted ratings.

## Reflective supervision

To better understand perceptions of professional development and performance management, the survey explored experiences of reflective supervision, both in terms of receiving and providing supervision.<sup>17</sup>

### Receiving reflective supervision

LA child and family social workers in non-managerial roles were asked about the frequency of receiving reflective supervision, their views on the adequacy of this frequency, and their views on the quality of the supervision.

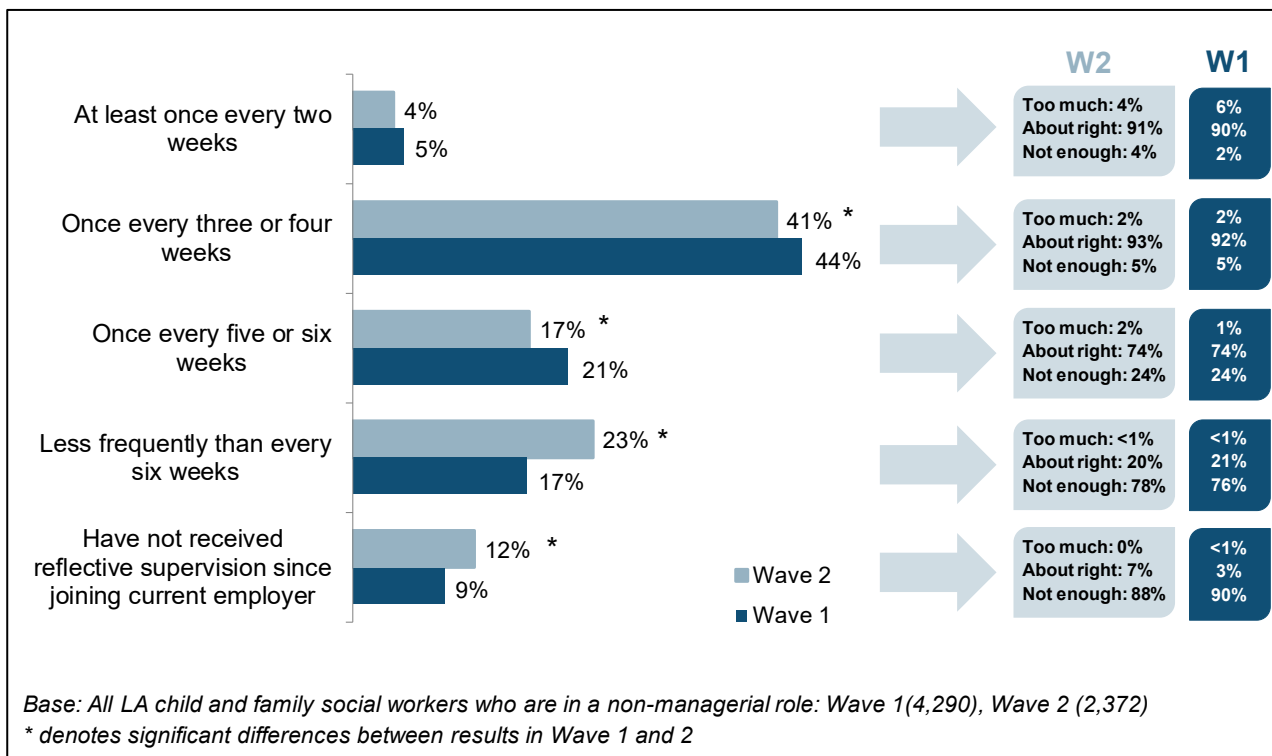
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<sup>17</sup> In the Wave 2 survey, reflective supervision was defined as: a learning process that allows the practitioner to explore the factors influencing their practice, including emotions, assumptions and power relationships; develop an understanding of the knowledge base informing their practice and its limits; and, to identify next steps.

As shown in Figure 4.5, the frequency of receiving reflective supervision varied. It was most common to receive supervision once every three or four weeks (41%), although it was not uncommon to receive it less frequently than this; 17% received it once every five or six weeks and one in four (23%) received it less frequently than every six weeks. Only a small minority (4%) received supervision more frequently than every two weeks. One in eight (12%) had not received any reflective supervision since they joined their employer.

Compared with Wave 1, social workers reported receiving reflective supervision less frequently. The proportion receiving supervision once every three or four weeks has dropped (from 44% to 41%), as has the proportion receiving it every five or six weeks (from 21% to 17%). At the same time, there has been an increase in the proportion receiving it less frequently than every six weeks (from 17% to 24%) or never having received it since joining a current employer (from nine per cent to 12%). This is primarily driven by those who were on their ASYE in Wave 1 moving into more senior roles (predominantly front line practitioner roles) where reflective supervision became less frequent; over one quarter (27%) of ASYEs in Wave 1 received supervision at least once every two weeks, while only five per cent of those who were promoted from ASYE between waves received it this frequently. Further, only 17% of Wave 1 ASYEs received supervision less frequently than every six weeks, increasing to 25% for those promoted from ASYE between waves.

**Figure 4.5 Frequency of receiving reflective supervision, and views on its adequacy, Wave 2 and Wave 1**



Around two-fifths (44%) of those who had not received any reflective supervision at their employer at Wave 1 had also not received supervision at Wave 2. This group

disproportionately consisted of front line practitioners: 73% of those who had not received reflective supervision in either wave were front line practitioners, compared with only 55% of the Wave 2 sample overall. They were more likely to work in Fostering (31%) compared with 14% for all LA child and family social workers.

Those who had moved local authority between waves were more likely to have not (yet) received reflective supervision at their current employer than those who stayed at the same local authority (27% compared with 10%). Linked to this, social workers who had been at their employer for less than a year were much more likely than others not to have received reflective supervision at their current employer (28% compared with 12% on average). Further, agency staff were more likely than those employed directly by a local authority to have not received reflective supervision (19% compared with 10%). Findings indicate that the increase in those who have received no reflective supervision at their current employer compared with Wave 1 is attributable to those social workers who have recently moved local authority or who have more fluid working situations, such as agency workers.

Interestingly, frequency of receiving reflective supervision differed little by job role, although practice leaders were more likely than those in more junior roles to get reflective supervision less frequently than every six weeks (34% compared with 23% on average).

Job satisfaction was linked to the amount of reflective supervision received, with those who were satisfied far more likely to receive supervision every three to four weeks (47% compared with 22% of those dissatisfied). Social workers who were dissatisfied with their jobs were more likely to receive it less frequently than every six weeks (32% compared with 21% who were satisfied) or to have never received it at their current employer (23% compared with nine per cent who were satisfied).

Consistent with the link between job satisfaction and Ofsted rating seen elsewhere, reflective supervision was more frequent in LAs which were highly rated by Ofsted. Over half (51%) of those working at an 'outstanding' LA received supervision every three to four weeks, compared with around four in ten at other local authorities (42% at 'good', 39% at 'requires improvement' and 38% at 'inadequate' authorities). Those working at an 'inadequate' LA were most likely to have never received supervision at their current employer (15% compared with 12% for 'requires improvement' and 'good' and seven per cent at 'outstanding' local authorities).

There is a strong link between experiences of reflective supervision and feeling stressed. Those who reported being stressed in their jobs received supervision less frequently; only 36% received it every three to four weeks, compared with 54% who were not stressed, and 28% received it less than six-weekly compared with 17% who were not stressed. Unsurprisingly, therefore, those who felt stressed were much more likely to report that they did not receive enough supervision (43% compared with 22% of those who did not feel stressed).



A link also exists between caseload and views on reflective supervision. People with more cases received supervision less frequently and were more likely to feel they were not receiving enough. For example, those social workers with at least 21 cases were more likely than those with fewer to receive supervision less often than every six weeks (26% compared with 21%). Further, those with a higher number of cases were more likely to feel that the amount of reflective supervision they received was 'not enough'; 42% with 26+ cases and 40% with 21-25 cases thought they were not getting enough, falling to 37% of those with between 11 and 20 cases and 32% for those with 10 cases or less.

As with Wave 1, social workers who received reflective supervision more often were the most positive about it. Nine in ten of those who received reflective supervision every four weeks or more often felt this was sufficient (91% receiving it every one or two weeks and 93% receiving it every three or four weeks). In contrast, three-quarters (74%) who received it every five or six weeks thought that this was the right amount, and just one in five (20%) of those who received it less frequently than every six weeks. Views on the amount of reflective supervision received were consistent across waves.

Social workers who had received reflective supervision were typically positive about its quality. Four in five (78%) rated the supervision as good (19% 'very good' and 59% 'good'), while around one in five thought that it was poor (16% said 'poor' and two per cent 'very poor').

Social workers in the following groups were most likely to rate supervision as either good or very good:

- those who were satisfied with their jobs (84% compared with 53% who were dissatisfied);
- those who did not feel stressed by their job (87% compared with 72% who were stressed);
- those who had undertaken employer-supported training or CPD in the preceding 12 months (78% compared with 70% who had not); and
- those with no physical or mental health condition (79% compared with 73% with a health condition).

## **Providing reflective supervision**

Around one quarter of social workers provided reflective supervision, and this proportion increased slightly between Wave 1 (25%) and Wave 2 (27%). In terms of job role, it was most common for team managers to provide supervision (91% did so), followed by senior service managers / directors (60%), while around half of practice supervisors (49%) and practice leaders (46%) provided supervision.

The increased proportion providing supervision between Wave 1 and Wave 2 reflects the increase in the proportion of responding social workers in senior positions: one third (34%) of promotees between Wave 1 and Wave 2 became team managers and one in five (21%) were promoted to practice supervisor positions.

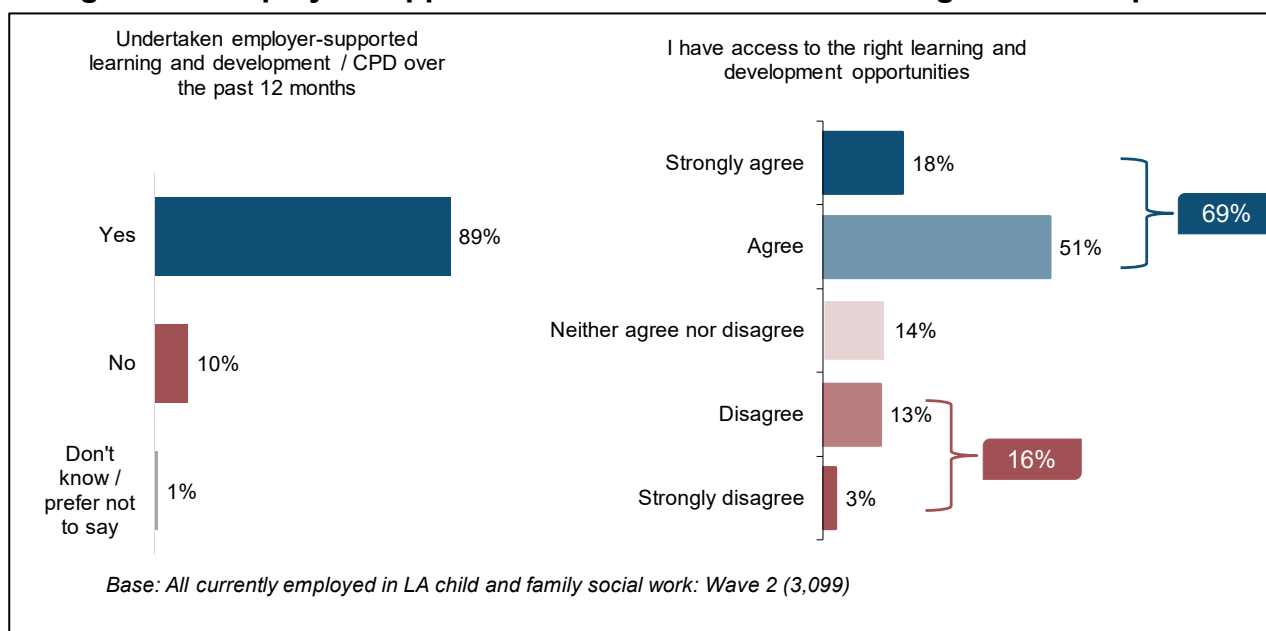
Almost all (97%) of those who were responsible for providing reflective supervision were confident in their ability to do so (34% were 'very' confident and 62% 'fairly confident'), an increase compared with Wave 1 (94%).

## **Learning and development**

In Wave 2, LA child and family social workers were asked about access to and uptake of training and Continual Professional Development (CPD) opportunities and also whether they had been endorsed or assessed through the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS).

The vast majority (89%) of social workers reported having undertaken employer-supported learning or CPD within the 12 months prior to being surveyed (Figure 4.6). This was defined as "learning and development that has been provided, facilitated or funded by your employer". However, fewer - 69% - agreed that they were able to access the right learning and development opportunities when they needed to. Those who had moved LAs between survey waves were less positive about access to learning and development opportunities at their current employer, suggesting that new joiners may have to wait for training opportunities: 24% of movers disagreed that they had access to the right opportunities, compared with 15% who were working at the same LA as Wave 1. In support of this, those who had been at their employer for less than a year were less positive about their access to the right training and development opportunities (60% agreed compared with 69% overall).

**Figure 4.6 Employer-supported CPD and access to learning and development**



Although there was little variation by job role for having undertaken training/CPD in the past year, front line social workers were less likely than those in more senior positions to agree that they had access to the right learning and development opportunities (66% agreed, compared with 76% of practice supervisors, 77% of practice leaders, 73% of team managers and 75% of senior service managers or directors).

Social workers who were employed directly by a local authority were more likely to both have engaged in training/CPD and have had access to the right opportunities compared with agency staff. Over nine in ten (92%) of local authority employees had undertaken training/CPD in the past 12 months, compared with seven in ten (72%) of agency staff. Similarly, 72% of local authority employees felt they had access to the right opportunities, compared with just 56% of agency staff.

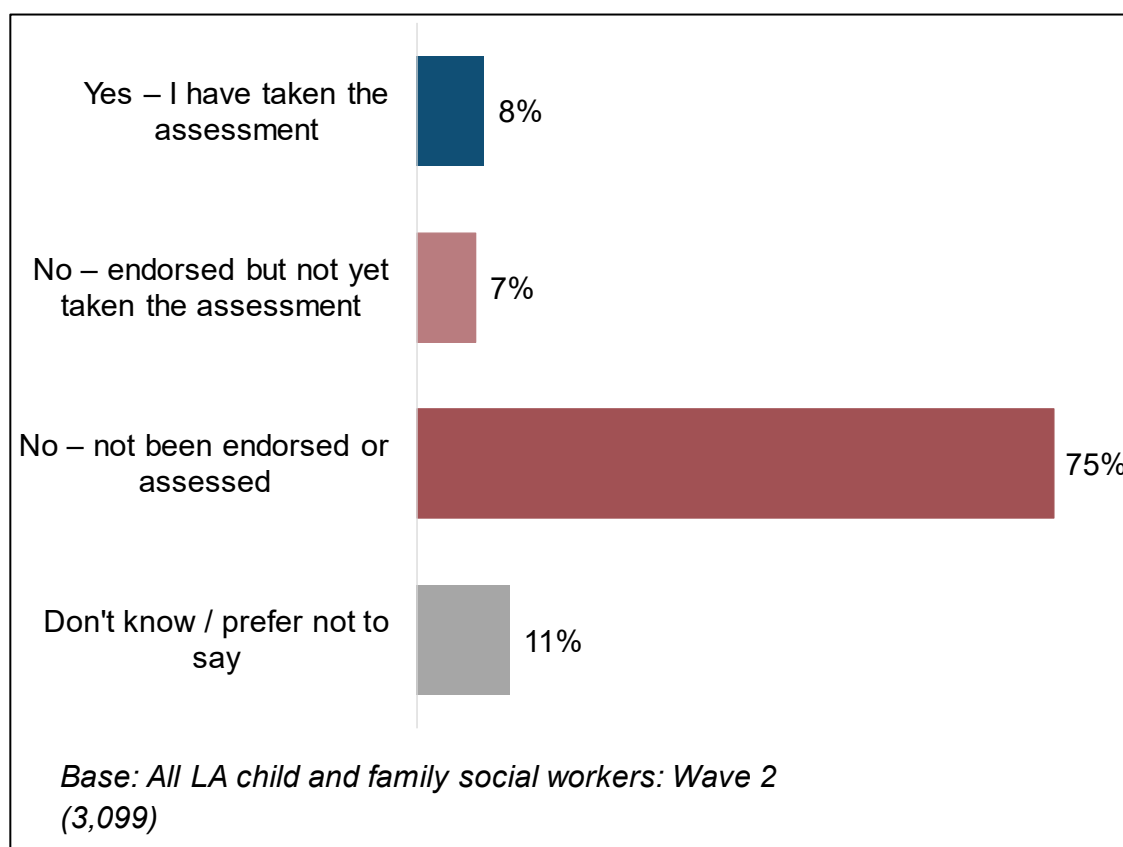
Other notable differences in terms of uptake and access to training/CPD include:

- those satisfied with their jobs were more likely to have undertaken training/CPD (92% compared with 81%) than those who were dissatisfied, and to agree that they have access to the right opportunities (76% compared with 44%);
- those at local authorities with a high Ofsted rating were more likely to agree they have access to the right opportunities (77% at 'outstanding' LAs, 70% at 'good', 69% at 'requires improvement' and 60% at 'inadequate'), although it was interesting that Ofsted rating had no impact on uptake of employer-supported CPD or training;
- fewer social workers with a physical or mental health condition had done any training/CPD (86%) or felt they could access the right learning and development opportunities (60%) compared with those who did not have a health condition (90% and 72% respectively); and

- social workers working full-time hours (36+ hours per week) were more likely to agree that they had access to the right opportunities than part-time staff (70% compared to 64%). However, this did not have any bearing on whether they actually had undertaken any employer supported training or CPD in the past year (89% of full-time staff and 90% of part-time staff had done so).

A minority of LA child and family social workers in the study had been assessed through NAAS at Wave 2, which is to be expected given that at the time of the Wave 2 survey, NAAS was only operating in a proportion of LAs. Eight per cent had been assessed at Wave 2, while seven per cent had been endorsed but not yet assessed (Figure 4.7). The majority had neither been endorsed nor assessed (75%), with one in ten (11%) unsure or preferring not to say.

**Figure 4.7 Involvement in NAAS, overall and among front line practitioners**



Of all those in the Wave 2 sample who had been assessed through NAAS; 43% were front line practitioners, 22% team managers, 10% practice supervisors, nine per cent senior service managers or directors and five per cent practice leaders. A higher proportion of those who were in senior roles had been assessed through NAAS than front line practitioners; 13% of practice leaders, 12% of practice supervisors, 11% of senior

managers or directors and 10% of the team managers in the survey had been assessed, compared with six per cent of front line practitioners.

Others in the Wave 2 sample who were more likely to have been assessed through NAAS were:

- those employed directly through a local authority rather than those working for an agency (nine per cent compared with three per cent); and
- those working in: Prevention / Early Help (16%, compared with eight per cent on average); First response/ Front door/ MASH (11%); Child Protection and Looked After Children (both nine per cent).

## 5. Views on job satisfaction and career progression in child and family social work

This chapter examines how satisfied social workers were with various aspects of their job, including the opportunity to develop their skills, the sense of achievement they get from their work, and their job security; their job satisfaction overall; and their views on their career progression to date.

The key findings are as follows:

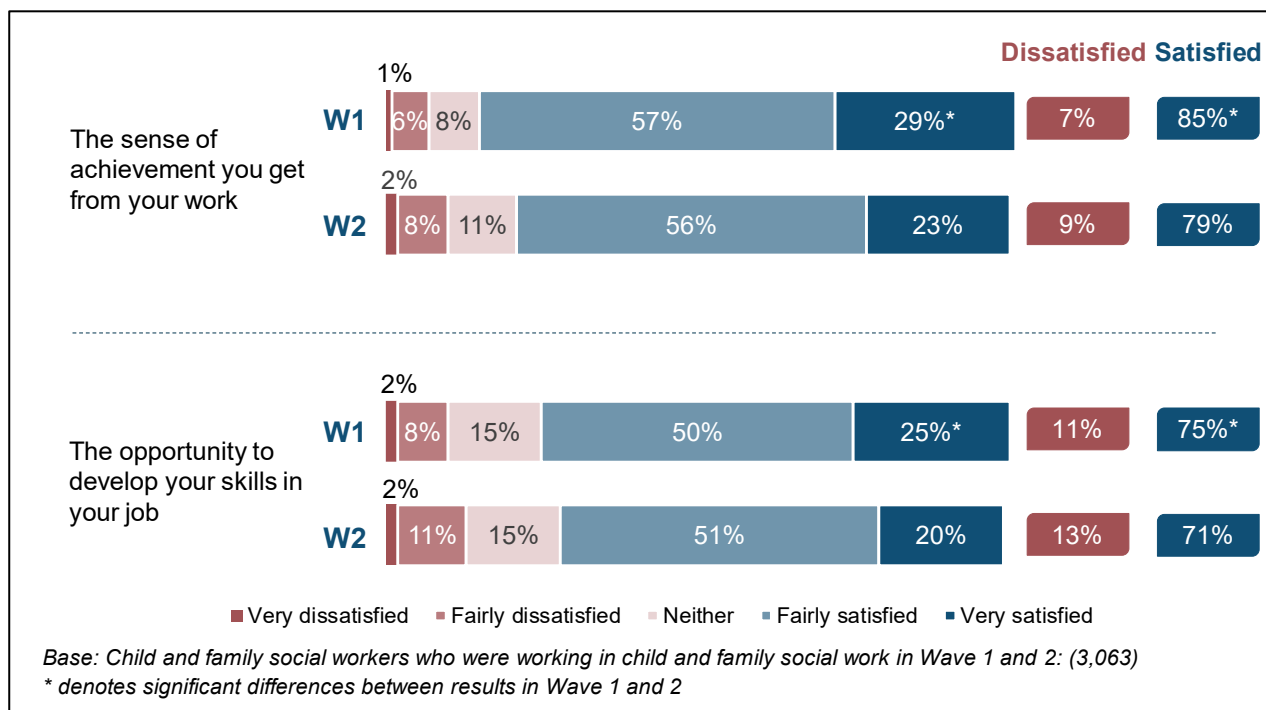
- Most social workers (73%) at Wave 2 found their job satisfying. Although this was consistent with the proportion at Wave 1 overall (74%), among those working as child and family social workers who took part at both waves, the proportion who were satisfied had decreased (from 78% in Wave 1, to the 73% in Wave 2).
- Social workers' satisfaction with some aspects of their job decreased between waves but increased for others.
- Those who were in the profession in both waves of the survey were less satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work at Wave 2 (79%, compared with 85% in Wave 1). Satisfaction with the nature of the work also decreased from Wave 1 to Wave 2 among social workers who took part in both waves (76% at Wave 2, compared with 82% at Wave 1).
- Social workers who remained in the profession in Wave 2 were, however, more satisfied with the pay they receive (58%) and their job security (81%) at Wave 2 (compared with 51% and 78% at Wave 1).
- Although social workers' transition from the ASYE programme to front line practitioner roles accounted for some of the variation in satisfaction between waves, changes were driven by a range of factors, including whether social workers had been promoted or moved local authorities.
- As in Wave 1, front line practitioners were less satisfied with various aspects of their job, including the opportunity to develop their skills in their current job (67%, compared with senior service managers (85%) and team managers (77%)).
- As in Wave 1, social workers were most likely to feel their career progression was in line with their expectations (59%), with more reporting it was below their expectations (20%) than above expectations (11%).

### Aspects of the job

As in Wave 1, the majority of social workers were satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work and the opportunity to develop their skills in their job. And, consistent across both waves, they were more satisfied with the former than the latter (79% and 71% respectively in Wave 2).

Figure 5.1 compares the Wave 1 and Wave 2 results for people working in child and family social work in both waves.<sup>18</sup> Social workers were less satisfied by both aspects of their job in Wave 2, particularly the sense of achievement they get from their work (79%, compared with 85% in Wave 1).

**Figure 5.1 Social workers' satisfaction with aspects of their job, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



The drop in job satisfaction between Wave 1 and 2 may, in part, be driven by social workers who transitioned from the ASYE programme to a front line role between waves. Of the social workers on their ASYE in Wave 1, nearly nine in ten (86%) were satisfied by the sense of achievement they get from their work in Wave 1, compared with seven in ten (70%) of this group in Wave 2. Reinforcing this, three-quarters (76%) of social workers on their ASYE in Wave 1 were in front line practitioner roles at Wave 2, and as findings from both Wave 1 and Wave 2 show, front line practitioners were typically least satisfied with aspects of their job.

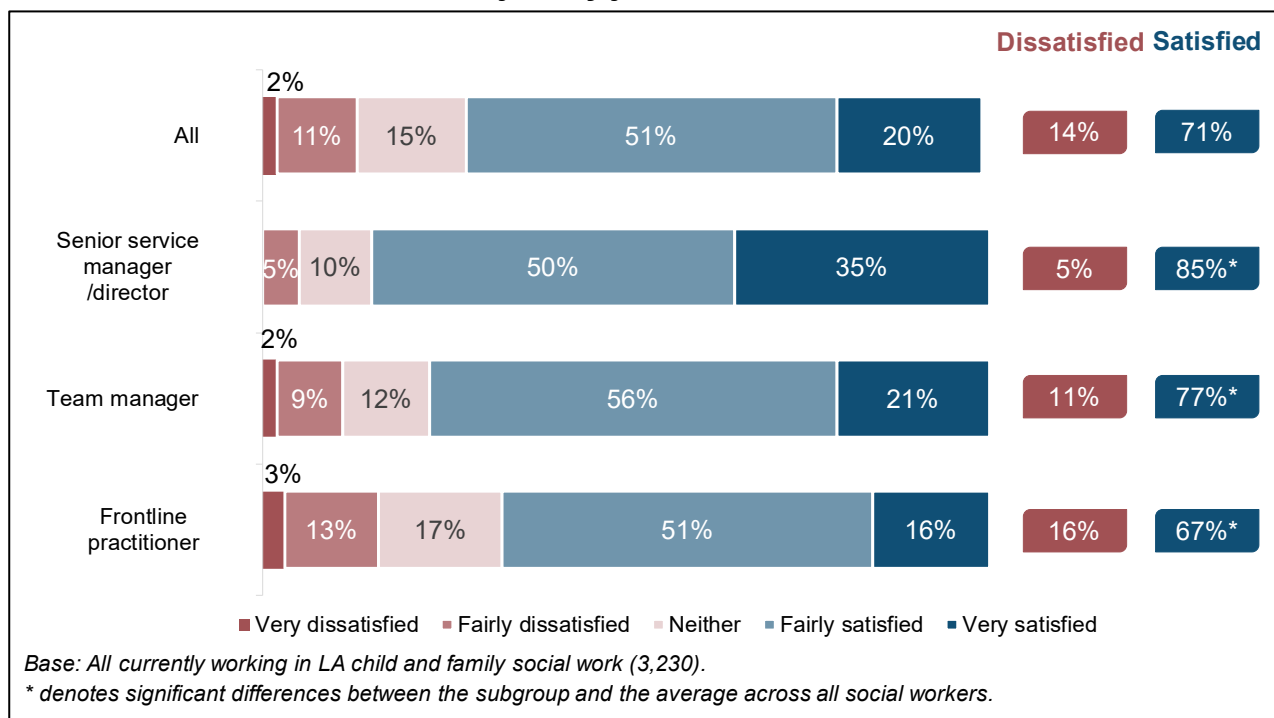
<sup>18</sup> As some social workers have moved into and away from LA child and family social work between waves, only social workers who were working in LA child and family social work in both waves have been compared between Wave 1 and 2. As such, the overall Wave 2 figures may differ slightly from those in the wave-by-wave comparisons.

Focusing on the Wave 2 findings, job satisfaction was higher amongst social workers who had undertaken employer-supported CPD in the previous 12 months. They were substantially more likely to be satisfied with the opportunity to develop their skills in their job, but were also more likely to feel satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work (81%, compared with 66% of social workers who had not undertaken any employer-supported CPD).

Job satisfaction in relation to the opportunity to develop skills was also influenced by contract type. Social workers on a full-time contract were more likely to be satisfied with the opportunity they have to develop their skills (72%, compared with 66% of those on part-time contracts), perhaps indicating social workers on part-time contracts have less access to skills development opportunities.

Mirroring the Wave 1 findings, social workers' satisfaction with various aspects of their job differed by the seniority of their role. For example, Figure 5.2 shows that while two-thirds of social workers in front line practitioner roles were satisfied with the opportunity to develop their skills in their current job (67%), this was lower than senior service managers (85%) and team managers (77%).

**Figure 5.2 Social workers' satisfaction with opportunity to develop their skills in their job, by job role, Wave 2**



Also echoing findings from Wave 1, social workers with the following characteristics were more likely to be satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work and the opportunity to develop their skills in their job:



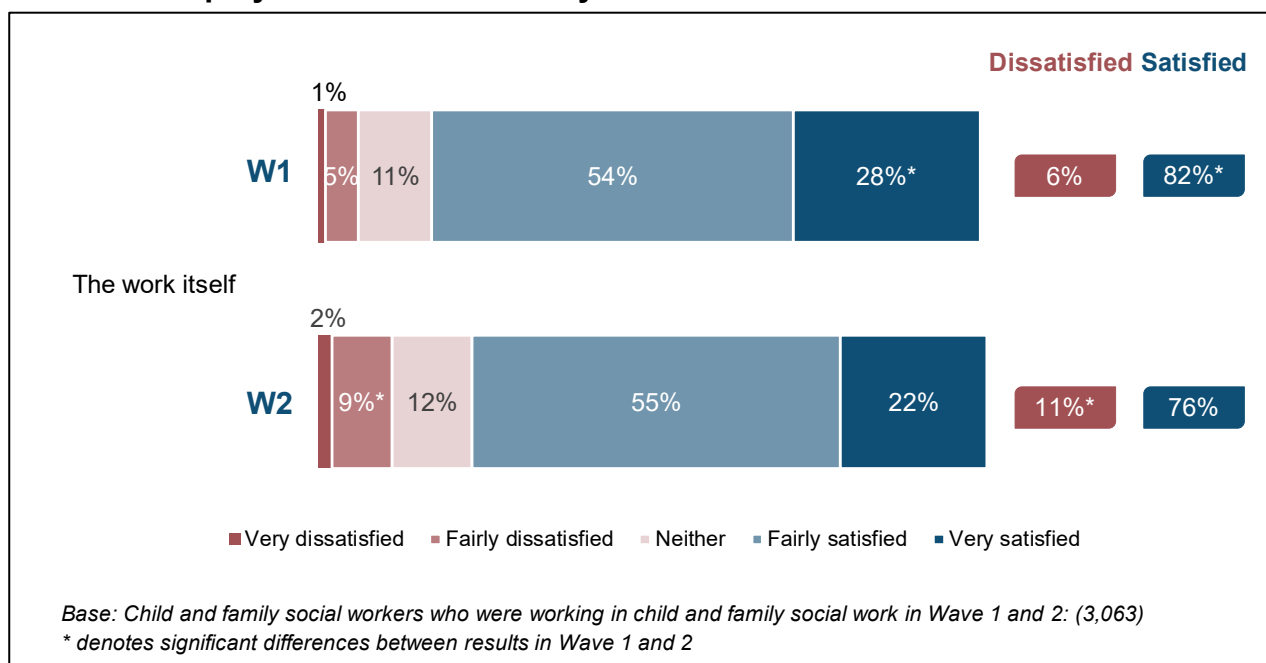
- social workers at LAs with an 'outstanding' Ofsted rating. Over three-quarters (78%) of these social workers were satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work, compared to three in five (61%) social workers in 'inadequate' Ofsted-rated LAs;
- social workers working in Education. Almost all (95%) of these social workers were satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work, compared with 77% working in Children with Disabilities, 76% working in Assessment, and four in five (79%) on average; and
- social workers without a physical or mental health condition. Three-quarters (74%) of these social workers were satisfied with the opportunity they have to develop their skills in their job, compared to three in five (61%) social workers with a physical or mental health condition. This difference was more marked than in Wave 1 (when 73% and 66% were satisfied respectively).

## The work itself

Three-quarters (76%) of child and family social workers in Wave 2 were satisfied with the nature of the work, in line with overall findings for Wave 1 (78%).

Among those social workers who took part in the survey in both waves and have continued to be employed in child and family social work, however, Figure 5.3 shows that satisfaction decreased between waves (76% in Wave 2, compared with 82% in Wave 1). This group were also more likely to be dissatisfied with the work itself (11% in Wave 2, compared with six per cent in Wave 1).

**Figure 5.3 Social workers' satisfaction with the nature of the work, among those employed in child and family social work in Wave 1 and Wave 2**



Unlike other aspects of the job, the drop in satisfaction with the work itself does not appear to be driven by social workers transitioning from the ASYE programme to front line practitioner roles. Indeed, consistent proportions of the social workers who were on their ASYE in Wave 1 were still satisfied with the work itself in Wave 2 (76% and 73%, respectively).

Although not necessarily explaining the drop in satisfaction with the nature of the work, one symptom of dissatisfaction may be reflected in the decision to move between local authorities. Seven in 10 (71%) social workers who had moved local authorities between waves were satisfied with the work itself, compared with over three-quarters (77%) of those who remained in the same LA. Social workers who had remained in the same LA were most satisfied with the work itself.

As with other aspects of the job, social workers who had undertaken employer-supported CPD in the previous 12 months were more satisfied with the nature of their work (77%, compared with 67% of respondents who had not undertaken employer-supported CPD).

Similar to the findings explored earlier in this chapter, satisfaction with the nature of the work itself was linked to:

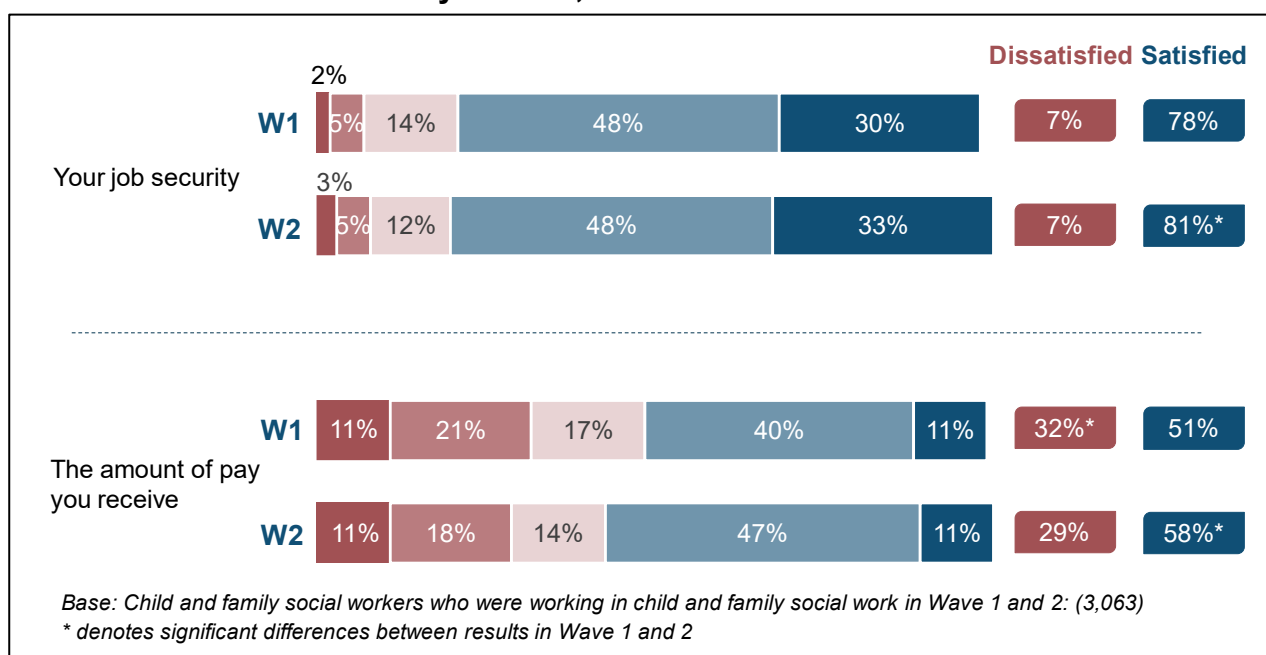
- job role (satisfaction was lower amongst front line practitioners (71%), especially compared with social workers in more senior roles such as team managers (84%) and senior service managers (92%); and
- local authority Ofsted rating (being lower in local authorities rated as 'inadequate' (72%) compared with those rated 'outstanding' (83%). This difference in satisfaction was more marked in Wave 2 than Wave 1.

## **Pay and job security**

As in Wave 1, social workers were considerably less satisfied with the amount of pay they received (58%) than with their job security (81%), although satisfaction across both measures was significantly higher in Wave 2 than in Wave 1 (when 51% and 78% were satisfied with pay and job security, respectively) amongst those who were in child and family social work in both waves.

Figure 5.4 shows the proportion of social workers who remained in child and family social work in both waves who were satisfied with each aspect of their job, so the proportions differ slightly from those quoted above.

**Figure 5.4 Social workers' satisfaction with job security and the amount of pay they receive, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



The increase in satisfaction with job security between waves may have been influenced by a number of factors, including:

- whether the social worker had moved local authorities - 83% of social workers who had moved local authorities between waves were satisfied with their job security, compared with 63% of those who had not;
- the transition of social workers completing their ASYE to front line practitioner roles - nine in ten (89%) of the social workers who had completed their ASYE between Wave 1 and Wave 2 were satisfied with their job security, compared with eight in ten (81%) on average; and
- whether the social worker had been promoted - 85% of social workers who had been promoted between Wave 1 and Wave 2 were satisfied with their job security, compared with 79% of those who had not been.

The increase in satisfaction with pay between waves is less easily explained. Social workers who were on their ASYE in Wave 1 were no more likely to be satisfied with the amount of pay they received in Wave 2 (regardless of whether they had completed their ASYE between waves). There were also no significant differences between social workers who had been promoted and those who had not.

However, social workers who had moved local authorities between Wave 1 and Wave 2 were more likely to be satisfied with the amount of pay they received than those who had not (68% compared with 56%, respectively), which may reflect that people were moving local authorities partly due to better pay. Another factor may be linked with relocation,

which was one of the main reasons for moving between LAs. If social workers are moving to areas where the cost of living/ housing is lower, or reducing their journey to work costs, they may be relatively more satisfied with their pay even if they have not received an actual pay rise.

Additionally, social workers aged between 35 and 44 years old were most likely to report higher satisfaction between waves, with 48% satisfied with their pay in Wave 1 compared with 59% in Wave 2. Social workers in Yorkshire and the Humber saw the greatest increase in satisfaction in pay between waves (48% in Wave 1, rising to 64% in Wave 2).

The characteristics of social workers who were satisfied with their job security differed markedly from those who were satisfied with their pay; indeed, those most satisfied with pay were sometimes least satisfied with job security (e.g. agency workers).

In line with Wave 1, satisfaction with job security varied by the following:

- local authority Ofsted rating – nine in ten (88%) of social workers in ‘outstanding’-rated LAs were satisfied with their job security, compared with three-quarters (75%) of those in ‘inadequate’-rated LAs; and
- agency status – 85% of LA-employed social workers were satisfied with their job security, in comparison with just 55% of those working for an agency, as might be expected given the short-term nature of agency work.

Job role had a significant influence on satisfaction with pay. Social workers in senior job roles, which are more highly paid, were more satisfied (79% of senior service managers and 69% of team managers, compared with just 50% of front line practitioners).

Agency workers were more satisfied with their pay (72%, compared with 55% of local authority-based social workers), underlining the earlier finding that one of the key motivations for taking up agency work was better pay.

## **Public respect for the profession**

At an overall level, satisfaction with public respect for the profession remained relatively low in both waves , (26% in Wave 1, and 28% in Wave 2).

Although this remained relatively unchanged at an aggregate level, satisfaction increased slightly among the social workers who stayed in social work and took part in both waves of the study, from 25% in Wave 1 to 28% in Wave 2. This may suggest that social workers who were less satisfied with public respect for the profession are more likely to have left social work and/or not participated in Wave 2.

Indeed, social workers who had moved into a different type of job, outside social work, in Wave 2 were twice as likely as those still working in social work to be satisfied with public respect for their new role (56%, compared with of those still in social work 28%).

Unlike in Wave 1, perceptions about public respect for the profession did not differ by Ofsted rating or job role. Differences were, however, consistent in relation to:

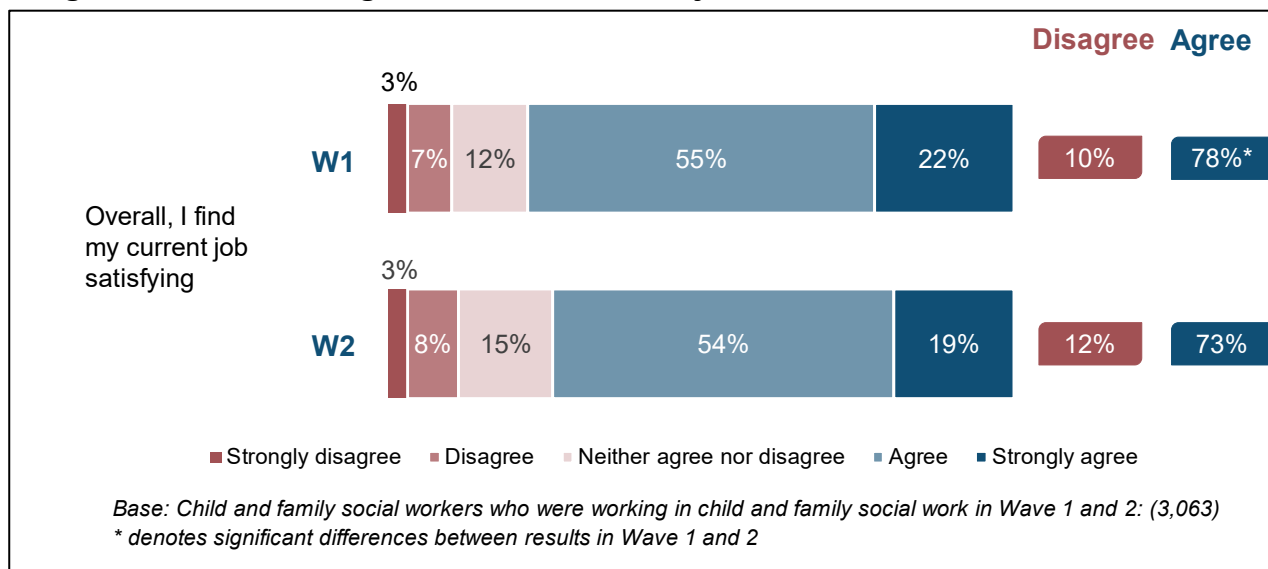
- area of practice – over half of social workers working in Assessment (54%) and Child Protection (52%) were dissatisfied with public respect for the profession, significantly higher than the average (46%); and
- length of time in child and family social work – social workers who had worked for more than ten years in the profession (35%) were more likely to be satisfied with public respect than those who had worked in social work for five years or less (21%).

## Overall job satisfaction

At an aggregate level, almost three-quarters (73%) of social workers who took part in Wave 2 agreed that they found their current job satisfying. This was consistent with the aggregate for Wave 1 (74%).

However, Figure 5.5 focuses only on social workers who had taken part in both waves of the survey and had remained in child and family social work. This finds that the proportion who agreed that they found their job satisfying overall actually decreased (from 78% in Wave 1, to 73% in Wave 2).

**Figure 5.5 Extent of agreement with overall job satisfaction, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



In line with findings elsewhere in this chapter, lower rates of job satisfaction in Wave 2 may, in part, be driven by the transition of social workers finishing their ASYE and moving into front line practitioner roles. Three-quarters (75%) of social workers on their ASYE agreed that their job was satisfying in Wave 1, compared with two-thirds (67%) of the same group in Wave 2 (most of whom have now become front line practitioners). In Wave 2, overall job satisfaction was linked to the CPD opportunities available to social

workers. Three-quarters (75%) of social workers who had undertaken employer-supported CPD in the last 12 months agreed that they were satisfied with their job, compared with six in 10 (58%) who had not undertaken any CPD.

Those who benefitted from flexible working arrangements were more satisfied overall at Wave 2 than those who were not able to use such arrangements. For example, over four in five (82%) of those who job-shared agreed that they were satisfied overall (compared with 73% who did not job share), 75% of those who could use flexi-time were satisfied (compared with 69% who could not) and 74% who could take time off in lieu were satisfied (compared with 68% who could not).

Reflecting findings from Wave 1, the following differences in overall job satisfaction were sustained in Wave 2:

- front line practitioners were less satisfied with their job overall than those in more senior roles (67%, compared to 89% of senior service managers, and 80% of team managers). These differences were more marked than in Wave 1 (where the equivalent proportions were 69%, 86% and 78%);
- social workers who had a long term physical or mental health condition were less satisfied than those who did not (65%, compared with 76%). Again, these differences were more marked than in Wave 1 (where the equivalent proportions were 69% and 75%); and
- local authority-employed social workers had higher job satisfaction (75%), compared with agency workers (65%). As established earlier in this chapter, this may reflect that agency-based workers reported lower levels of job security due to the temporary nature of their work. Indeed, child and family social workers in Wave 2 who were satisfied with their job security were more likely to find their job satisfying overall: 78% who were satisfied with their job security were also satisfied with their job overall, compared to 53% who were dissatisfied with their job security.

The differences across job role were even more marked when considering just those who took part in both waves. Front line practitioners who took part in both waves were more satisfied in Wave 1 (72%) than Wave 2 (67%).

### **Key drivers of overall satisfaction**

In order to identify the main influences on front line child and family social workers' overall job satisfaction, a 'key driver analysis' was used to determine the variables which contributed most to overall satisfaction scores, which are not always apparent from bivariate analysis. A more detailed overview of the methodology employed for the key driver analysis can be found in the technical annex.

The outcome measure the model sought to explain was agreement with the statement: 'Overall, I find my current job satisfying', measured on a 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' scale.

Figure 5.6 shows the variables that have the greatest impact on satisfaction; the model produces a percentage to indicate how strongly each variable contributes towards overall satisfaction, so the higher the percentage the higher the impact on satisfaction. Strongest is the statement "I am proud to tell people that I am a CAFSW", perhaps not surprisingly it has a positive effect on satisfaction – the higher people rated on this statement, the stronger their level of satisfaction; this accounted for 10% of the impact on satisfaction of all the variables included in the model.

Next most important was "anticipated situation in 12 months – working outside social work" (9% of the impact on satisfaction), meaning that compared with those social workers who said that in 12 months' time they still see themselves as working directly within CAFSW those who said they see themselves working outside of social work altogether were less satisfied. The workplace well-being factor (a summary of responses to questions about: stress, workload and being asked to fulfil too many roles) also explained nine per cent of the impact on satisfaction, with those reporting negative workplace wellbeing less likely to be satisfied with their current job.

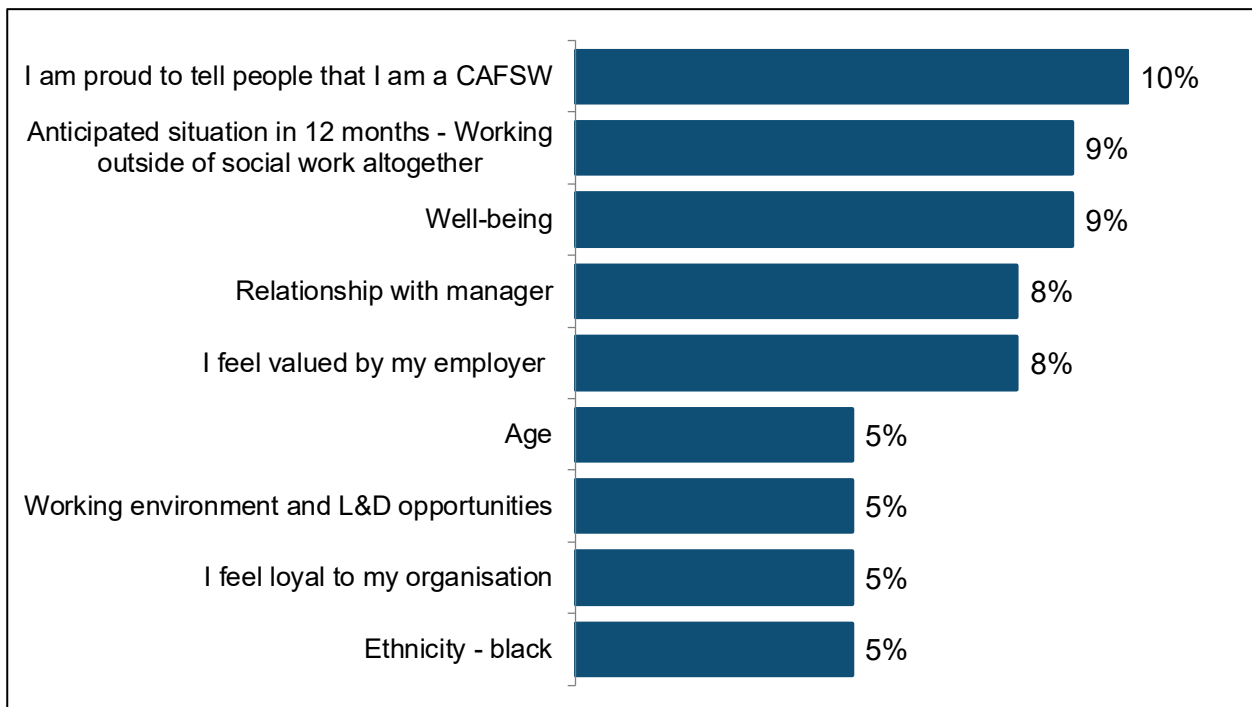
Relationship with manager and "I feel valued by my employer" were next most important; they both had a positive effect, a higher score on either measure resulted in a higher satisfaction score. The remaining variables shown each account for five per cent of the variance in satisfaction scores. Older staff are more likely to have higher satisfaction scores. Staff who had higher scores on the working environment factor, i.e. those who said that they had access to the right tools, resources and learning and development opportunities were more likely to be satisfied as were those who agreed that they are "loyal to their organisation". For the ethnicity category, the summary 'White' group was left out of the model as the reference category (as is necessary in this type of model). Black ethnicity is significant and has a negative effect, which means compared to White social workers, Black social workers were less likely to be satisfied. This relationship observed between satisfaction and ethnicity may in part reflect the correlation between agency workers and black social workers.

The model also produces a separate measure which indicates how effective the model is in explaining satisfaction. This model accounts for 36% of the variance in satisfaction scores, meaning it does not fully explain why some people are more satisfied currently with their job than others, rather it gives an indication of the key reasons.

Therefore, while overall satisfaction is primarily driven by the variables produced by this model, there remains a gap in understanding, indicating satisfaction may be partly driven by factors not currently captured in the survey, such as complexity of workloads and personal resilience. For example, qualitative interviews across the two waves have

highlighted occasions where social workers have high caseloads and feel stressed by their jobs but also report being satisfied, suggesting a strong personal resilience.

**Figure 5.6 Key Driver Analysis: main influences on social workers' agreement that 'overall, I find my current job satisfying'**



## Comparing job satisfaction of those working inside and outside social work

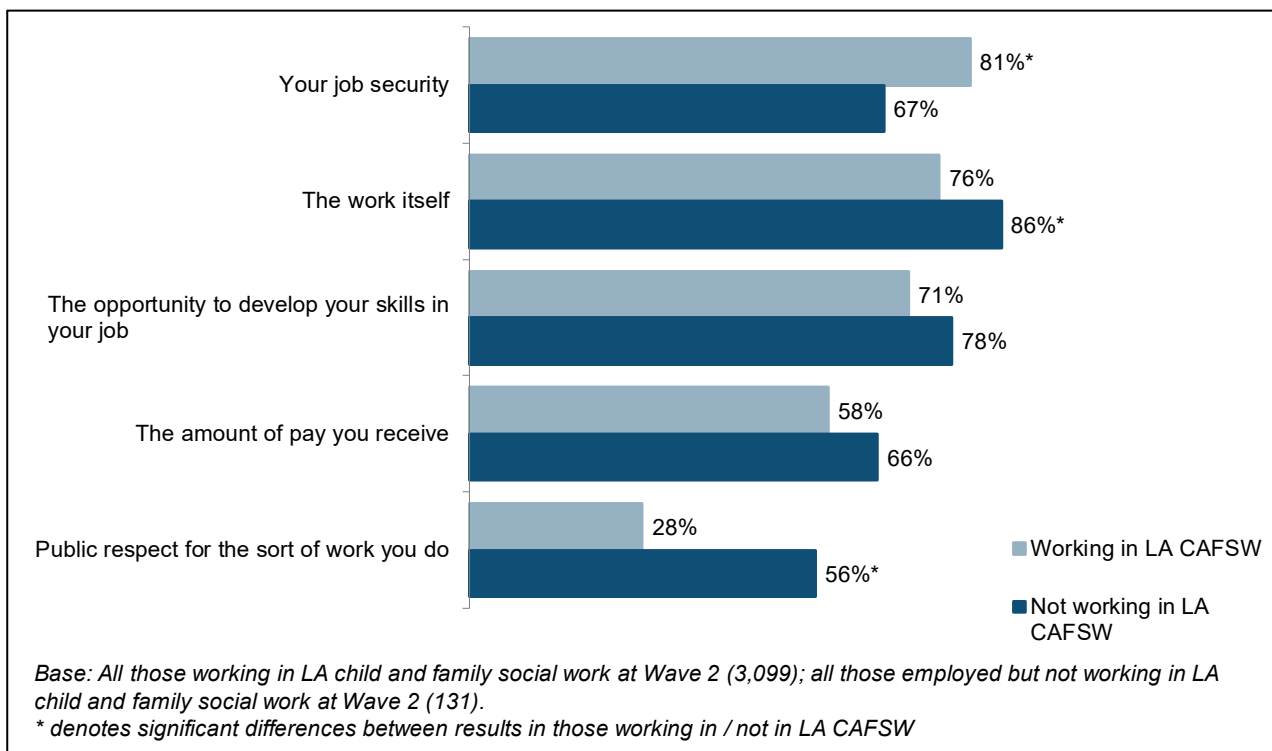
The job satisfaction measures were asked of all participants currently working, irrespective of whether that was inside or outside local authority child and family social work.

Figure 5.7 indicates the proportion of participants working inside and outside child and family social work who were satisfied with each aspect of their job. All those not currently employed in local authority child and family social work, including those working outside of social work altogether and those in other areas of the social work profession, fall into the 'outside local authority child and family social work' category.

For three of the five job satisfaction measures, there were significant differences between these two groups of participants. People who had moved out of child and family social work between waves were more satisfied with the work itself in their current job and the public respect for the work they do, although job security was higher amongst those still working in child and family social work. Figure 5.7 suggests, job security appears to be a key asset of social work compared with other roles.



**Figure 5.7 Proportion of participants working inside and outside local authority child and family social work who were satisfied with each aspect of their job**



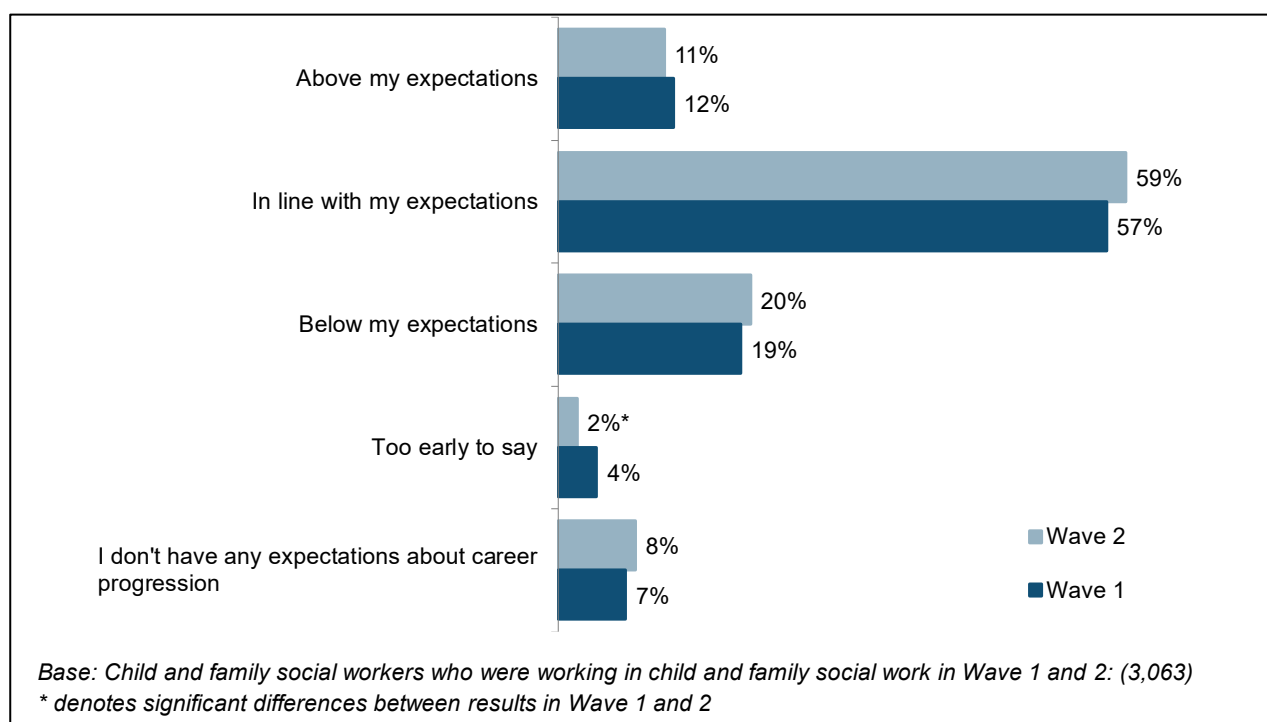
## Views about career progression

Figure 5.8 shows that social workers continued to be most likely to feel their career progression was in line with their expectations (59%), with more reporting it was below expectations (20%) than above (11%). These findings were consistent with Wave 1.<sup>19</sup>

Comparing only those who took part in Wave 1 and Wave 2, the results between waves were still comparable, the only change being the proportion who said it was too early to evaluate their career progression (which decreased from four per cent in Wave 1 to two per cent in Wave 2).

<sup>19</sup> For further information on the proportion of social workers that had been promoted between Wave 1 and 2 of the survey, please see Chapter 2 of the report.

**Figure 5.8 Social workers' views on their career progression so far, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



Notably, social workers who had been promoted between Wave 1 and 2 were twice as likely to rate their career progression as above their expectations (18%, compared with nine per cent of social workers who had not been promoted). Those who had been promoted were more likely to be younger (under 35 years old) than older (55 years old or over) – 54% and 14%, respectively. Social workers in the 25-34 year old age bracket were more likely than any other group to report that their career progression was above their expectations (16%, compared with 11% on average), highlighting that younger social workers who have been promoted are driving the increase in the proportion who regard career progression as above their expectations.

The most obvious explanation for the drop in the proportion of social workers reporting it was too early to rate their career progression is the transition from ASYE to front line practitioner roles. This was confirmed in the data: nearly three in ten (28%) social workers who were doing their ASYE in Wave 1 felt that it was too early to rate their career progression; just one in ten (10%) of this group reported the same in Wave 2.

Views on career progression were influenced by whether social workers had undertaken employer-supported CPD in the last 12 months. Three in ten (29%) social workers who had not received CPD in the last 12 months reported their career progression was below their expectations, compared with just two in ten (19%) of those who had. This suggests that those who have access to employer-supported CPD are more likely to feel their career is on track. In the qualitative interviews, career progression was often linked to increased specialisation, including having completed additional training or qualifications which enabled social workers to develop more specialist skills or expertise:

“If you demonstrate that you’ve got a particular skillset or that you’ve got actual practice expertise then local authorities, the ones that I’ve worked for, then that’s nurtured and able to progress. Progressed when I’ve needed to and when I had my son and I’ve needed flexibility and things like that, I feel like the local authorities that I’ve worked with are really supportive of that.”

Social workers who felt their career progression was above their expectations were more likely to have the following characteristics:

- be employed directly by their local authority: direct employees were four times more likely than agency workers to report this (12% and three per cent, respectively). This may reflect the fact that agency workers tended to be less satisfied with the job overall, and may also highlight some of the reasons that social workers gave for taking up agency work (after a career break, or due to stress of LA-based social work) – these reasons are explored in Chapter 2 of the report; and
- be aged between 25 and 34 years old: they were more likely than any other age group to report their career progression being above their expectations (16%, compared with five per cent of those aged 50 to 64, for instance). This may reflect the fact that people in this age group were more likely to have been promoted in the last year (as highlighted earlier in this section of the report) and there is more scope for promotion within these age categories (as they are more likely to be in more junior job roles).

As in Wave 1, the following groups were more likely to view their career progression as below their expectations:

- social workers with a mental or physical health condition (28% compared with 18% without a condition);
- those working at a local authority with an ‘inadequate’ Ofsted rating (24% compared with 19% from ‘good’ and 18% from ‘outstanding’ local authorities; or
- those from Black African/ Caribbean/ Black British (32%) and Asian/ Asian British ethnic backgrounds (31%), compared with 20% on average.

## 6. Social workers' short-term career plans, decisions to leave social work, and the influences on these

An important part of the research is to determine social workers' short-term career plans and to identify the reasons they may consider leaving or have left the profession. Understanding the push/pull factors that lead to social workers remaining in their position or wanting to move on will enable a better understanding of how retention can be improved in the sector.

This chapter explores career plans in the next 12 months, perceived transferability of skills outside of the sector and factors that influence considerations of leaving or remaining in child and family social work. It also explores the views and experiences of social workers who have left LA child and family social work. It describes the destinations of leavers, how satisfied they are with their new circumstances, and discusses their reasons for leaving the profession and the likelihood of returning. Sample sizes for leavers are too small to report on sub-group analysis and future waves of the research will look to capture this analysis, as the number of leavers increases over time. This chapter also draws on findings from the qualitative interviews, which were targeted among 'stayers' and 'leavers' from the profession to explore what influenced their decisions.

The key findings in this chapter are:

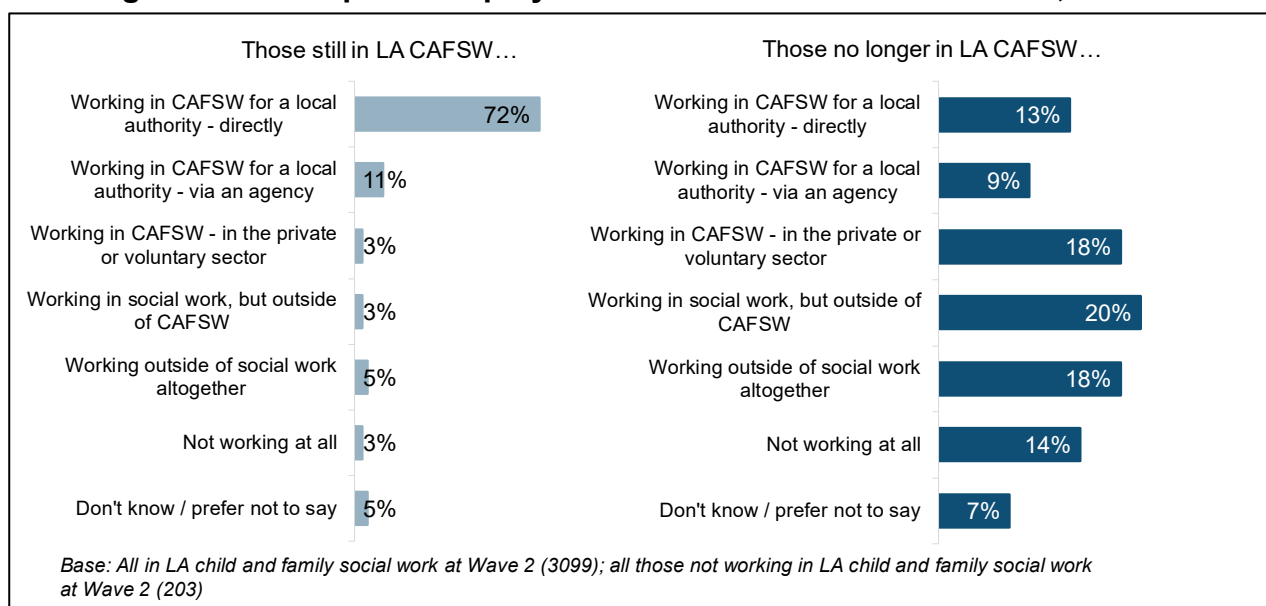
- The majority (72%) of local authority child and family social workers (including agency workers) anticipate remaining in the profession and being directly employed by a local authority in 12 months' time. One in nine (11%) expect to be working at an agency, although the majority of these were already working at an agency in Wave 2, and one in twenty (5%) expect to be working outside of social work altogether.
- The most commonly cited main reason for considering leaving child and family social work was retirement (20%) followed by disliking the culture of local authority child and family social work (14%) and personal reasons such as health (12%). In combination, factors related to overwork (15%) were also common.
- The primary factor that would encourage child and family social workers to remain in the sector was a more manageable caseload (18%), this was by far the most common factor although it was less commonly reported than in Wave 1. Social workers also cited a better working culture (8%) and better promotion/progression opportunities (6%).
- The majority who were considering leaving social work thought that they would use their social work skills in their next job: four in ten (42%) agreed that they would use their skills 'to a great extent' and one third (35%) agreed to 'some extent'.

- For those who were not in local authority child and family social work at Wave 2 (either who left between waves or were not in local authority child and family social work in Wave 1), four in ten (40%) thought they would be back in child and family social work in 12 months' time (13% directly employed by a local authority, nine per cent by an agency and 18% in the private/voluntary sector), while another 20% thought that they would be back in another type of social work. One in five (18%) expected to be working outside of social work altogether in 12 months' time.
- Two-thirds (64%) of those who had left child and family social work between waves reported that they were not likely to return to child and family social work within the next five years, while a third (34%) reported that this was likely.
- Overall, only a small minority (five per cent) of Wave 2 respondents who were in local authority child and family social work in Wave 1 had actually left by Wave 2, with three per cent having left social work altogether. Those who have left social work altogether are now employed in a different type of work, on a career break or doing something else (for example, retired, ill-health etc) (1% for each).
- Nearly half of leavers who had gone into a different type of work were still working in the health and social care sector. People who had moved into a job outside social work were more likely to find their new roles satisfying and less likely than social workers to be regularly working above their contracted hours.
- A high caseload was the most common reason for social workers to have left child and family social work but remain in social work. People who moved into jobs outside of social work were more likely to cite 'it was just not the right type of job for me' and 'I am taking a career break'.

## **Social workers' career plans in the next 12 months**

The survey asked all respondents what they anticipate they will be doing in 12 months' time. As shown in Figure 6.1, of those working in LA child and family social work in Wave 2 (including agency workers), around seven in ten (72%) expected to be working for a local authority directly in 12 months, with one in nine (11%) expecting to be working via an agency and one in twenty (5%) expecting to be working outside of social work altogether. There was no change in proportions of social workers' anticipated situation in 12 months' time between waves.

**Figure 6.1 Anticipated employment situation in 12 months' time, Wave 2**



Those employed directly by a local authority typically thought they would still be in LA child and family social work in 12 months' time (82%). Of those who thought they would be working elsewhere, or doing something else, plans were mixed. Four per cent thought they would move to agency child and family social work, two per cent expected to be in child and family social work in the private or voluntary sector, two per cent in a different area of social work altogether, three per cent working outside of social work and three per cent not working at all, mostly due to retirement or taking a career break.

The short-term career plans of agency workers were more varied. Only half (48%) of those currently at an agency thought they would still be working for one in 12 months' time, while one in five (21%) anticipated that they would be employed directly by a local authority. One in ten (11%) thought they would be working outside of social work altogether, compared with three per cent who were currently employed by an LA. This indicates that agency staff are more likely to plan to leave child and family social work than those employed directly through a local authority.

Front line practitioners were less likely to expect they would be directly employed by a LA in 12 months' time (65%) than senior staff (80% of those employed as a practice supervisor or above). They were also more likely to anticipate they would be working for an agency (13% for front line practitioners compared with eight per cent of practice supervisors or above). This reflects the higher proportion of agency staff currently employed as front line practitioners (71% compared with 55% of local authority staff), rather than a high proportion of front line practitioners planning to move from local authority to agency employment.

Of those still working in child and family social work, but who thought they would not be in 12 months' time, the most popular anticipated destination was employment outside of social work altogether. Over two-fifths (44%) of those thinking of leaving thought they

would be working in a different sector, while almost three in ten thought they would be working in a different area of social work (28%) or not working at all (28%).

Among those not currently working in child and family social work (both those who left between waves or were not in local authority child and family social work in Wave 1 either), expectations were more varied. Figure 6.1 shows that four in ten (40%) thought that in 12 months' time they would be working in child and family social work again; 18% in child and family social work in the private sector, 13% directly employed by a local authority in child and family social work and nine per cent in local authority child and family social work but employed by an agency. A further 20% thought that they would be back in social work, but not child and family social work. One in five (18%) expected to be working outside of social work altogether, and 14% did not expect to be working at all, almost all of whom were aged 55 or above so likely planning to retire.

## Reasons for considering leaving

Of those still working in child and family social work, a minority (8%) indicated that they were considering leaving the social work sector in the next 12 months. This group were asked about their reasons for this, and what might encourage them to remain.

While social workers mentioned a whole range of issues for considering leaving (Figure 6.2), when asked to cite their one main reason, retirement (20%) was the most common, followed by dislike of local authority social work culture (14%) and personal reasons (13%).

The culture issue was explored in more depth in the qualitative interviews. These showed that there could be divergent approaches within and between local authorities when it came to managing workloads. While some were very supportive, in others social workers described more of a 'get on with it' approach which they found difficult to sustain over a long period of time:

"The culture was, 'Yes, we know how hard everybody's working. Yes, it's really difficult, this is the way it is.' That was the culture. Although the recognition that caseloads were high, the complexity of the work .... they give it some lip service even though it didn't really go anywhere."

Another social worker cited how he felt the culture of local authority social work had become more bureaucratic and restrictive over the years, which, in his view, had constrained professional autonomy and resulted in the job becoming less rewarding and people-focused. After a career lasting several years he was now planning to take early retirement:

"It's more about paperwork and more about being behind a computer, for me personally, and, well, it's bringing the market values and professionalism of

business into our work. It's more like a business model, and I don't think that fits with working with people. We're working with people with-, especially very vulnerable people on the front line of social work, and they're not boxes of crisps, are they? They don't fit into boxes, and for me, I found it very restrictive."

Individual factors relating to overwork were cited as the biggest reason for considering leaving for a minority (only six per cent mentioned the amount of paperwork, five per cent the high caseload and four per cent the working hours). However, when these factors are combined, they show that overwork was the second most commonly cited factor for considering leaving child and family social work (cited by 15%).

Those with caring responsibilities cited reasons associated with workload more commonly than others; 13% cited the job being incompatible with their family or relationships (compared with four per cent without caring responsibilities) and eight per cent mentioned the high caseload (compared with two per cent overall).

**Figure 6.2 Reasons for considering leaving child and family social work, Wave 2**

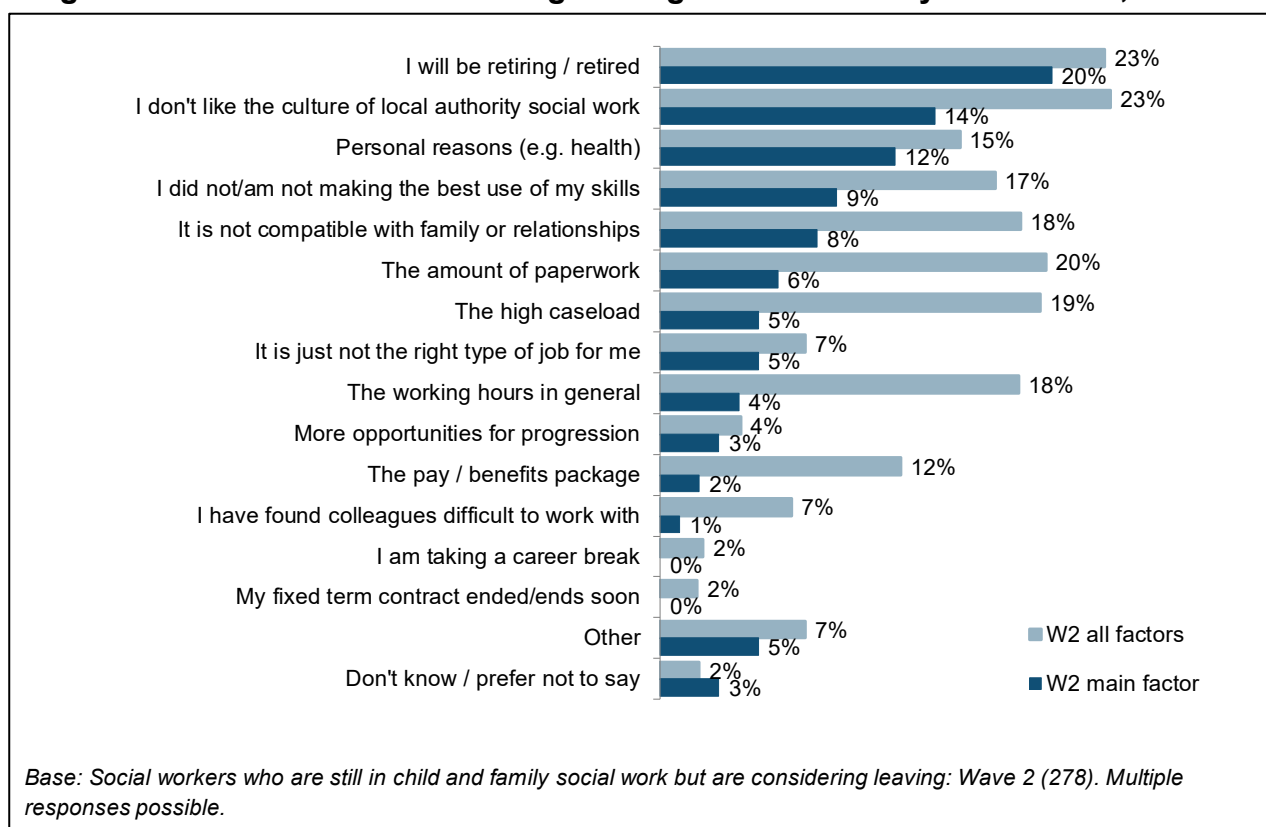
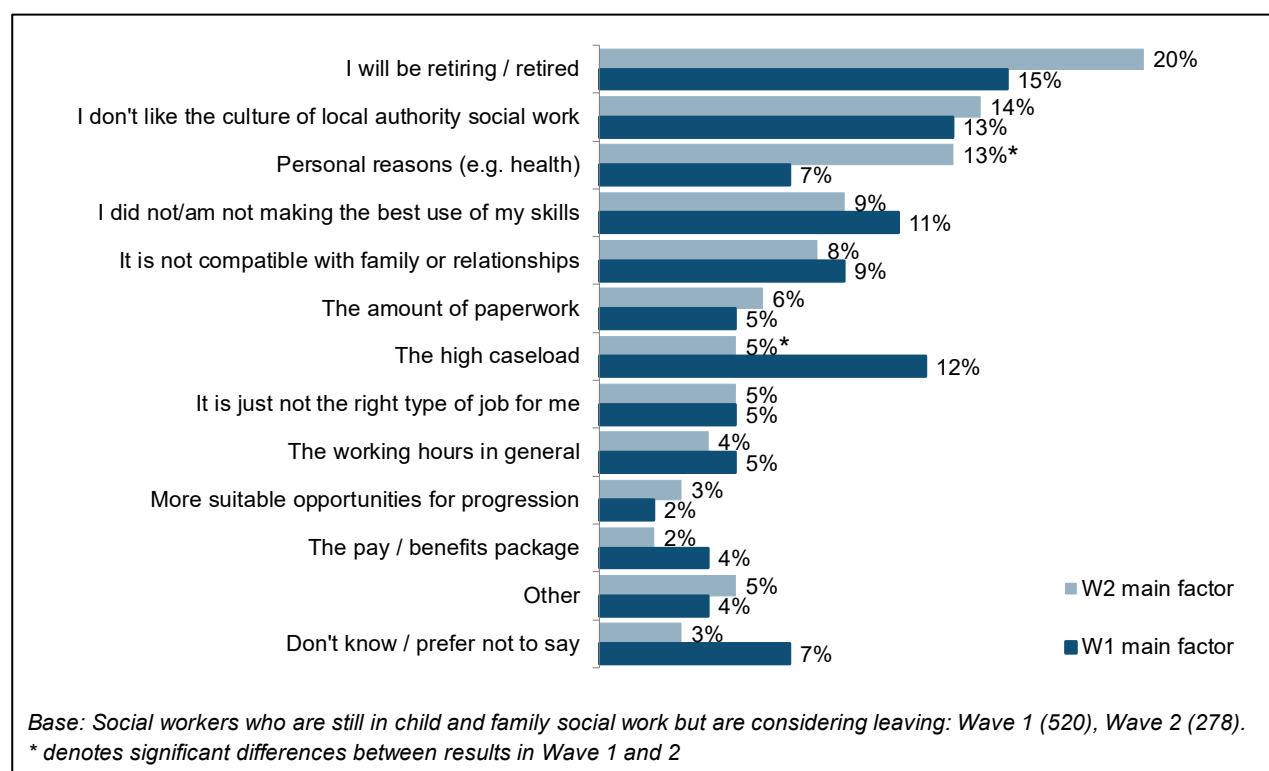


Figure 6.3 shows that the proportion of social workers considering leaving for personal reasons increased between Wave 1 and Wave 2 (from seven per cent to 12%), while the proportion citing retirement as the main reason rose, but not significantly (from 15% to 20%). This is reflective of the ageing cohort, one quarter (24%) of whom are now aged 55 and over (compared with 21% in Wave 1). While most other measures remained consistent across the survey waves, the proportion citing a high caseload as the main factor for considering leaving decreased in Wave 2 (falling from 12% to five per cent).



**Figure 6.3 Main reasons for considering leaving child and family social work, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



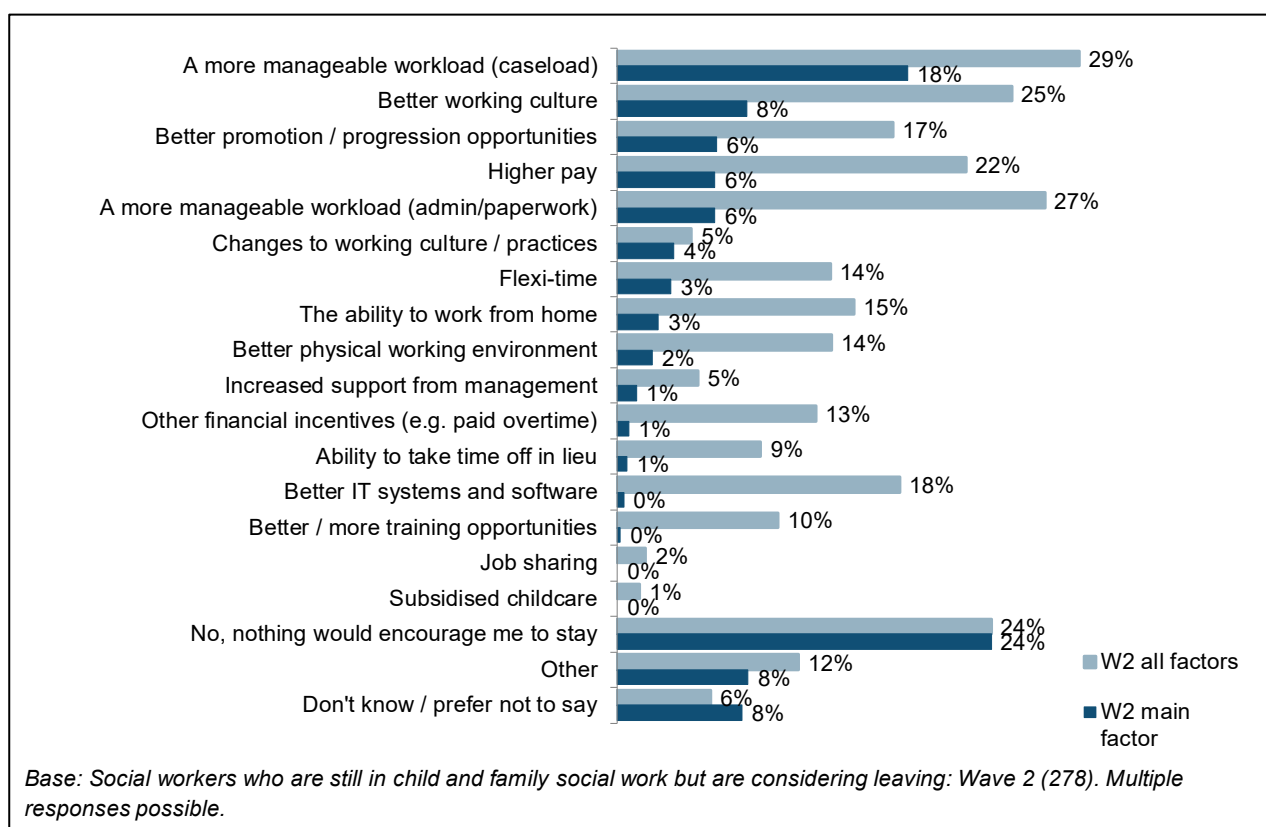
As well as factors that had led child and family social workers to consider leaving the sector, the survey also asked those thinking of leaving what would encourage them to stay.

Consistent with factors that made social workers consider leaving, when asked to cite all the factors that would persuade them to stay, adjustments to workloads were the most important. Just under three in ten cited a more manageable caseload (29%) and a more manageable workload in terms of administration and paperwork (27%). Other commonly cited factors were improvements to working culture (25%), higher pay (22%) and better promotion and progression opportunities (17%).

When asked to identify the one main change that would encourage them to stay in the sector (Figure 6.4), having a more manageable caseload was by the far the most common (prioritised by 18% of those thinking of leaving), followed by a better working culture (8%), better promotion / progression opportunities and higher pay (both six per cent).

As with reasons for considering leaving, improvements around factors associated with overwork were most commonly cited by those with caring responsibilities; for example, 23% of those who cared for others gave a more manageable caseload as the main thing that would encourage them to remain, compared with 14% with no caring responsibilities, and one in ten (10%) cited a more manageable caseload in terms of paper work (compared with three per cent who did not care for others).

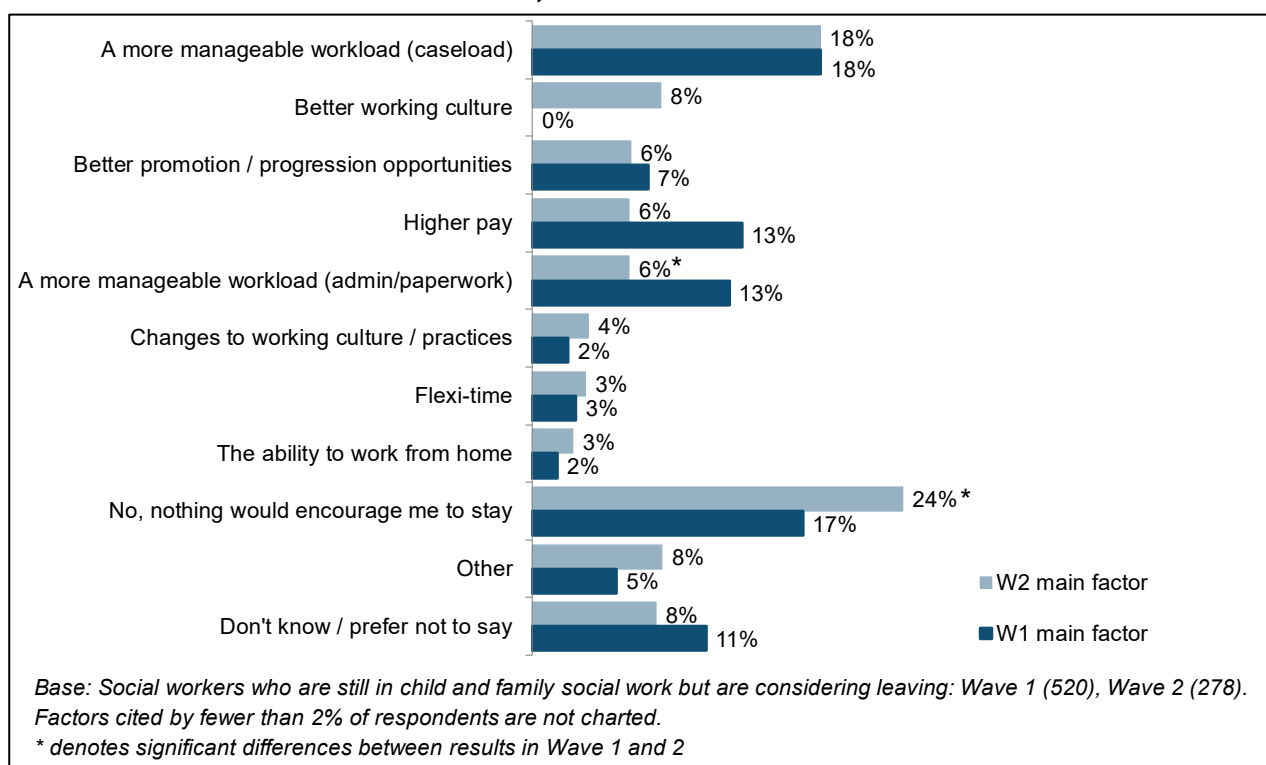
**Figure 6.4 All and main factors that would encourage social workers thinking of leaving to remain in child and family social work, Wave 2**



While a more manageable caseload was considered an equally important factor in Wave 1 (mentioned by 18% in both waves), fewer social workers in Wave 2 cited the main factor that would encourage them to remain as an increase in pay (6% compared with 13% in Wave 1) or a more manageable workload in terms of administration and paperwork (Figure 6.5).

In Wave 2 more social workers said there was nothing that would encourage them to remain (24% compared with 17% in Wave 1); of those, four in ten (40%) were planning to retire and 15% cited personal reasons as their main reason for considering leaving, again reflecting the ageing profile of the cohort.

**Figure 6.5 Main factor that would encourage social workers thinking of leaving to remain, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



The vast majority of child and family social workers who were considering leaving the social work sector entirely expected to use their social work skills in their next job. Four in ten (42%) agreed that they would use their skills 'to a great extent' and one-third (35%) agreed to 'some extent'. Only a minority did not think their social work skills would not be transferable; six per cent said not they would not use them very much and nine per cent said they would not use them at all. These views were consistent across waves.

## Destinations and satisfaction of leavers

Only a small proportion (five per cent) of Wave 2 respondents who were working in local authority child and family social work in Wave 1 had left by Wave 2, with three per cent having left social work altogether. Those three per cent were now employed outside of social work, on a career break or doing something else (for example, retired, ill-health etc) (1% for each).

People who had moved into work outside of social work were asked about their new job role. Nearly half of them now worked in the health and social care sector in support officer and administration roles such as healthcare worker, casual support worker, domestic abuse worker and medical practice administrator. The remaining roles were largely a mix of teaching and policy/ research (for example, teaching social work, primary school teaching assistant, Policy Manager and Research Fellow).

These leavers were more likely than stayers to agree with the statement 'Overall, I find my current job satisfying' (85%, compared with 73% of people still working in child and family social work).

People who had moved into a job outside of social work were less likely than social workers to be regularly working above their contracted hours. Leavers were more likely to report occasionally working over and above their contracted hours in their current job compared with the average child and family social worker (39% compared with 23% average). However, leavers were less likely to report working over their contracted hours most weeks and all the time, compared with the average social worker (16% each for most weeks and all the time, compared with 37% each for social workers).

## **Reasons for leaving**

We saw in Chapter 3 that high caseloads were the main driver of stress so it may not be surprising that high caseloads were also the most common single (main) reason for leaving cited by social workers who had left child and family roles but remained in social work (17%).

Caseloads were not the main reasons for leaving among those who left social work altogether. Instead, leavers who had moved into non social-work roles were more likely to cite 'it was just not the right type of job for me' and 'I am taking a career break' (15% and 12%).

## **Potential influences on social workers to return to the profession**

Two-thirds of leavers between waves reported they were not likely to return to child and family social work in the next five years (64%) while one-third (34%) reported they were likely to do so, and two per cent did not know or preferred not to say. Those who said they were likely to return were more likely to have childcare responsibilities than other social workers (43% with childcare responsibilities said they were likely to return, compared with 34% on average). Looking at the 154 social workers who reported they were likely to return to social work, the majority had been employed by a local authority and had worked as a front line practitioner. Once the number of leavers has increased across future waves, the study will explore these trends, and the characteristics influencing them.

Former social workers no longer in LA social work were asked what might encourage them to return to child and family social work in the future and were able to select multiple options. The most common responses echoed the reasons they left the profession, and the causes of stress that child and family social workers reported: a more manageable caseload (37%), a more manageable workload (28%), higher pay (27%) and

a better working culture (25%). When prompted to choose one main thing that might encourage them to return to social work, a more manageable caseload was the most important influence (24%).

## **Exploring decisions to stay in or leave child and family social work: evidence from the qualitative interviews**

In Wave 2 the qualitative interviews were targeted with four groups of social workers, according to their plans at Wave 1, and their status at Wave 2. Ten interviews in each group were conducted with people who:

- said they were going to stay in child and family social work at Wave 1 and stayed;
- said they were going to leave child and family social work at Wave 1 and stayed;
- said they were going to stay at Wave 1 and left; and
- said they were going to leave at Wave 1 and left.

Due to the more focused nature of the sample and the ensuing analysis of the qualitative interviews in Wave 2, the findings from these are presented together in this section of the report.

### **Why did social workers stay or leave?**

The qualitative interviews revealed that decisions about staying or leaving were highly personal, and could be affected by a range of factors including the extent of the gap between expectations of doing the job compared with reality; personal resilience and strategies for handling the workload and dealing with stress; and organisational factors which could either have a 'protective' influence in building resilience, or exacerbate difficulties.

Amongst those who said they would leave but stayed, one social worker with 12 years' experience commented about the need to adjust your expectations about what is possible, to survive in front line work. This is important when considering the amount and type of training and work experience that social workers do, prior to starting work in the profession:

"What your expectations are when you come in in terms of wanting to do a good job, and what the reality is in terms of what you can physically do and still have some kind of semblance of work-life balance and family life. If you can't lower that bar, it's a terrible thing to say, you're just going to get chewed up and spat out very quickly."

Another from this group who was a team manager noted the importance of reminding yourself why you became a social worker in the first place, which could be supported through effective reflective supervision and team meetings:

“In our supervision we share, sort of, achievements. Just those moments that remind us of why we came into the work, of, you know, you actually feel useful, because oftentimes it's a thankless role, or you often don't see the results of your intervention, so you never know if you're actually doing the right thing for families. Those moments are the ones that, you know, you have to hold on to.”

The importance of the initial motivation and vocation were also important for those who said they would stay and stayed, alongside rewarding aspects of the job such as variety, professional development and contributing towards positive outcomes:

“There are still lots of things that I like about social work. I like the variety. No day is the same. You're always learning. Improving outcomes is just the best thing ever, when you do get them. So, it's just about, I think it's just who I am. I can't imagine doing anything else right now.”

In response to why people have left, there were a range of issues revolving around workload, stress, culture, business support, management, and personal reasons. These issues often interacted. It should be noted that many of these issues were also faced by those who have remained in child and family work, although not always in the same team or local authority. The interview evidence suggests that a good relationship with a supportive line manager could make all the difference in this context.

### **Workload and stress**

High workload was a particular issue among those social workers who had young children or other family commitments, and when this impacted heavily on family life it could be a driver in the decision to leave the profession. One former social worker stated that the 'lightbulb moment' for her occurred when her son asked to see her diary to book an appointment:

“And there was the time at home, when he had to look in my diary just to see if he could put some time in to have a conversation with me....this is not only impacting on me, its impacting on my family.”

Similarly, another former social worker said:

“You actually end up doing more for the children you work for than your own children, and that's the nature of social work.”

Notably, social workers pointed out the difference between caseload and workload, emphasising that perceiving caseloads in purely numeric terms can be misleading and neglects the complexities of a workload:

“When I started I was really anxious about caseloads and the number of cases that I would have and what I've come to realise is that I could have 25 children on

Child in need and Child Protection plans and probably just keep my head above water, but if I had three families in care proceedings and no other work I would still be constantly drowning.”

Qualitative interviewees gave examples that demonstrated how having a good relationship with a proactive manager could help to address issues around workload and stress. A social worker who has stayed in her post said that if it had not been for her manager’s responses to her difficulties with her son she would have left. Similarly, another described how job-related stress had affected her work and personal life:

“So unhappy, I wasn’t sleeping, I was fighting with my partner, I wasn’t able to give the families the time that they deserved, which made me more guilty, which spilled over in the rest of my life.”

She had weathered the storm because of support from her manager and was still in social work, even though she had previously indicated that she was going to leave.

Workload and stress appeared to be closely connected. One worker commented on the expectation that they would work from home in the evenings and at weekends to try to catch up with the workload, which had a cumulative impact on their mental health over time:

“Working from home every night and over weekends as well, that was seen as the norm, as part of the culture’....It was obviously extremely stressful and I was burning out ..it just led to that burnt out feeling of never being on top of anything ...So I decided that I just needed to leave for my own mental health.”

This is not to say that the social workers did not anticipate or expect stress. But whilst many regarded stress as being inherent in the job, the culture of the organisation could help or hinder workers from managing it.

“Last year I had a bit of a mental health breakdown that was work-related, and I guess in a way perhaps it’s a worry that that’ll happen, and knowing that the reality as a social worker means that it probably will happen again, because I’m almost certain I would be put in that position again where I won’t be supported and won’t feel safe.”

“Everybody was just covering their backs, and your managers were down on you and pushing and pushing, and for me, I ended up off work with stress.”

Interviewees did mention employers’ attempts to support wellbeing including; Time off in lieu (TOIL), counselling, and sports centre membership. Where taking TOIL was seen as part of the team culture this was highly valued, but another worker noted that she used ‘TOIL to stay at home and catch up with her cases’ and another pointed out the difficulties of taking TOIL when workloads were constantly busy:

“I have 37 hours of TOIL accrued, when am I going to take it?”

Provision by employers to promote wellbeing varied. For example, one social worker commented that, after two ASYEs had told their manager they were not coping, the response was seen as superficial and not the practical type of support they were seeking:

“The next week they put up a wellbeing board, - with posters - go for a walk at lunchtime; if you are feeling bad try eating your five fruit and veg. ... it was ridiculous.... that was the response we got, not the offer of external supervision or counselling.”

Where managers supported workers to take their TOIL and where it was seen as expected to do so within the working culture, this was welcomed by social workers.

Social workers expressed mixed views on the value and accessibility of counselling. This was valued particularly when it was provided by an external provider rather than by the local authority. One social worker expressed the view that external supervision with a therapist had prevented them from going off sick with stress and a manager who paid for their own counselling found this to be very helpful.

The main issue that some social workers had with counselling was that this did not address the underlying causes of their stress, and it could be difficult to access because of their high workloads. Several interviewees felt that more needed to be done to prevent burn-out in the first place:

“There is not enough energy or time spent on preventing burn-out of staff –it’s just sort of glossed over.”

“I routinely see people struggling and very visibly struggling and (...) counselling doesn't change the workload.”

Reducing working hours or changing the nature of their job role or contract (such as becoming self-employed), had a positive effect on alleviating stress and promoting wellbeing among some social workers who had made these changes:

“I’m sleeping better now, I’ve got a better life-work balance and can spend more time with my family.”

“There are times I probably work weekends, but that's alright, I can book that in and I can take that time back.”

One stayer who had changed their role from Child Protection to working in Fostering was generally representative of others who had changed roles from the front line, speaking of how, while they still had a high workload, it did not come with the same amount of unpredictability and pressures:



“There’s a lot of work to be done but it’s not the same, you don’t have the same intensity, the same sort of pressures coming at you from different sides, you know, your caseload isn’t changing on a regular basis, you’re not ...going to work one day and found out that you’ve been allocated to some like really horrific you know, piece of work.”

In relation to moves outside of social work, there was a common theme whereby some people felt that sacrificing income was worth it for a lower-paid job - for the (perceived) reduced levels of stress and responsibility – or for the improved sense of personal wellbeing and fulfilment:

“If you ain’t got a stressful job you don’t get paid as much, but that’s a sacrifice I knew I was willing to take, so I suppose I’ve got different stresses now. I’ve got money stresses a little bit now, but I would rather worry about money than worry about children’s lives.”

“Wellbeing is much better in that I haven’t got a computer sat at home beckoning and summoning me to check every ten minutes. I haven’t got a phone that is expected to be answered every minute of the day. I’m not writing reports anymore which is wonderful, I’m using my creative, my passion really well in doing a lot more of the motivational interviewing and spending more time with children which is why I went into children’s social work in the first place.”

The major challenge appears in being able to find a balance between the worlds of work and home. Some people are able to manage these, whereas for others they become so imbalanced or overwhelming that social workers leave. It is not easy to determine why this is the case, but it is likely that both personal and organisational factors are significant in the decisions made by individual workers depending on their particular circumstances.

### **Culture and management**

The qualitative interviewees represented a range of cultures irrespective of whether they had stayed or left the profession. One social worker who was intending to leave was now pleased to stay because of the positive effect of a new manager:

“I cannot stress how massive that change is, in terms of my personal health and my personal well-being.”

Most staff felt valued by their line manager and peers irrespective of whether they intended to stay or have left.

The position with senior managers/ leaders was different with generally a poorer view of them as valuing workers or their work. Senior managers were sometimes seen as too far removed from practice and the day-to-day experience of children’s social workers as they had ‘lost sight of what it means to be a social worker’ or ‘telling people what they’ve not

done rather than what they have done'. One social worker described how there was a culture of anxiety and fear within their former local authority:

"When senior managers came on the floor, people used to duck down and try to almost physically hide from them. It's like, 'Oh my God, they're coming, you know, what's gone wrong this time? ... That's not a healthy work environment."

Other respondents were more positive of senior managers who sought to learn the names of the team and visited offices. Workers valued senior managers who would offer praise, were seen as listening and sought to 'build people up rather than tear them down' and where 'good work messages are passed upwards'. It was noticeable that workers were most committed to their teams and one social worker admitted they felt that they were letting the team down when they left. In general workers felt valued by their teams and on occasion by their employers, as one stated:

"Yes, we had World Social Work Day where we'd all sit around, and we had a nice little conference thing, and they'd do the yearly awards which was really nice. I did feel valued."

Another issue for social workers was when their own manager was seen as struggling with stress. This could permeate the rest of the team and also meant that they did not want to 'burden' their manager with their own issues. It was also noticeable that a number of those who had previously said they were leaving but had now stayed had had a change of manager from one who was seen as unsupportive to one who was now viewed as supportive. Reflective supervision was rarely mentioned as happening often enough. Interviewees did mention that reflective group supervision was offered but many felt that it was not sufficiently in-depth to help:

"It never really happened, and it just felt a little bit like lip service to something that might have been helpful, but unless you were enabled to have the time ....there was no way in which it could have been helpful."

Generally, interviewees said that when supervision occurred it was seen more as caseload management, except for the few occasions already noted where managers were highly valued. Managers who were interviewed also noted difficulties in having their own supervision needs met. One team leader found running a team as all-consuming but had a difficult relationship with her own manager. She made the suggestion for more 360 degree appraisals of managers to address this issue.

Paperwork was a feature of all posts that none of the qualitative interviewees spoke positively about. One social worker claimed they spent 80% of their time on administration and queried whether this was more for their employer than for improving the quality of practice. Associated with paperwork was the issue of business support

including administrative support and IT. Generally, where teams had administrative support this was highly valued by workers:

“She was the glue for the entire team, she was fantastic. She knew what work we were doing ...She was always checking on us and making sure we were okay.”

More commonly though, business support had been reduced. Many of those who had been in employment longer identified this as a role that had diminished or disappeared altogether over recent years. The trend identified in the interviews was that social workers were being expected to do more of their own administrative work. This was less of an issue where the social workers had good IT and good IT support. Good IT that allowed workers to access their employer's database, complete their computerised forms, access and complete emails, and write reports, with IT support, was the ideal. For others this ideal was not met due to outdated or unsuitable technology. For example, one worker noted her employer provided:

“Really old phones, can't email on them, memory fills up so can't store texts, need smartphones. I have an iPad but it's not suitable for long emails.”

It was noted that good IT promoted flexible working whereby staff could complete work from their car or home. This was valued by some workers, but others felt this could lead to isolation of staff. There was also a view that jobs were made more difficult by IT systems which were unsuitable or constantly changing.

“Electronic recording systems - used to be up to date when there were paper systems, then moved to [provider X] which they said wasn't fit for purpose, then to [provider Y] which was supposed to be fantastic, but now this is not fit for purpose either.”

Those who said at Wave 1 that they planned to leave the profession, but have stayed, were not particularly positive about their working conditions either. Instead, many of them expressed a stubborn streak, relishing a sense of challenge, and a personal determination to stay in the job:

“I've spent most of my social work career trying to convince myself that I'm good at this job and until I do that, I feel like I'm sticking and I won't be moving on anywhere.”

## **What do social workers think would improve retention?**

All the qualitative interviewees were asked to identify three key changes that would significantly improve the quality of their working life and enhance retention within the workforce. On examining the different lists between the four groups there was no real difference and the same issues come to the fore.

These issues revolved around providing more resources so that there are more social workers to help reduce workloads, allowing social workers to spend more direct time with children, and better pay and conditions of service. Alongside this there is also a wish to see more preventative services to provide early help for families as the majority view was that 'everything else is a sticking plaster'. There was a general concern about the poor public and media image of social work, which respondents felt should be addressed to help celebrate the profession and value it more, similar to Government campaigns on teaching or working in the NHS.

In relation to practice there was also a call from some interviewees for better children's care placements, the need for more reflective supervision and group supervision, with better administrative support for staff and more initiatives to promote worker resilience, such as wellbeing programmes and flexible working. Alongside this was also a call for employers to invest in their staff, some of whom were moving as they felt their career path was limited in their current local authority. Other issues raised included the need to reduce bureaucracy, and to promote stability in teams, for example by providing more support to managers and avoiding placing short-term agency staff into team management roles where possible. Some interviewees talked of having several managers in the last 12 months, which could impact on the quality of case supervision and personal line management.

A key variable that arose from the interviews is the ability to have a good/professional relationship with one's manager, particularly if this also resulted in good supervision. Where this is negative it is more likely to result in people wishing to leave and doing so. Similarly, examples were given where the supportiveness of a team can act as a resilient factor in allowing people to remain in difficult and stressful roles. Interviewees identified caseloads as a potentially misleading indicator of workload and stress levels (given variation in the complexity of different cases), but nearly everyone interviewed felt that reduction in caseloads would lead to a better quality of practice and greater satisfaction with the role.

The impact of personal issues and the emotionality of the role were also indicated as being important for retention. These issues were identified by some as taking a significant toll on their wellbeing and acting as a 'tipping point' for them leaving. Those who were more likely to stay had found ways of managing the 'two worlds'.

The qualitative interviews revealed that flexible working arrangements are valued by social workers but are not enough in themselves to make workers who are considering leaving want to stay. The interviews raised deeper issues related to workplace culture, such having a TOIL policy which encourages workers to take their TOIL and not to worry that doing so will cause more stress for them when they return. Other features like business support and appropriate IT are technical irritants that social workers felt could be addressed for greater worker satisfaction and potential productivity gains. These

factors also suggest that the importance of being in control of one's workload, rather than being controlled by it, are important for longevity in social work practice.

## 7. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE): new entrants

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) was introduced in 2012 as a way to better support newly qualified social workers into the profession. Across England around 2,800 people start the ASYE in child and family social work each year. In Wave 2 of this research, a separate survey was carried out with social workers who started their ASYE between October 2018 – June 2019.

### Profile of ASYE participants

This section examines the demographic profile of participating ASYE social workers across both waves, looking specifically at gender; age; ethnicity; disability; and caring responsibilities.

#### Gender and age

Consistent with Wave 1, the majority of social workers on their ASYE who participated in the survey were female (85%), with only a minority (13%) of male respondents and one per cent who preferred not to say. This is closely aligned with the overall population figures for child and family social workers (86% female and 14% male).<sup>20</sup>

Figure 7.1 shows the age profile of new ASYE participants compared with the ASYE cohort in Wave 1. Just over half (51%) were aged between 25-34 at the time of completing the survey, consistent with Wave 1 (47%). One fifth (20%) were aged between 34-44, while a smaller proportion were either younger than 25 (13%) or aged 45 or older (14%).

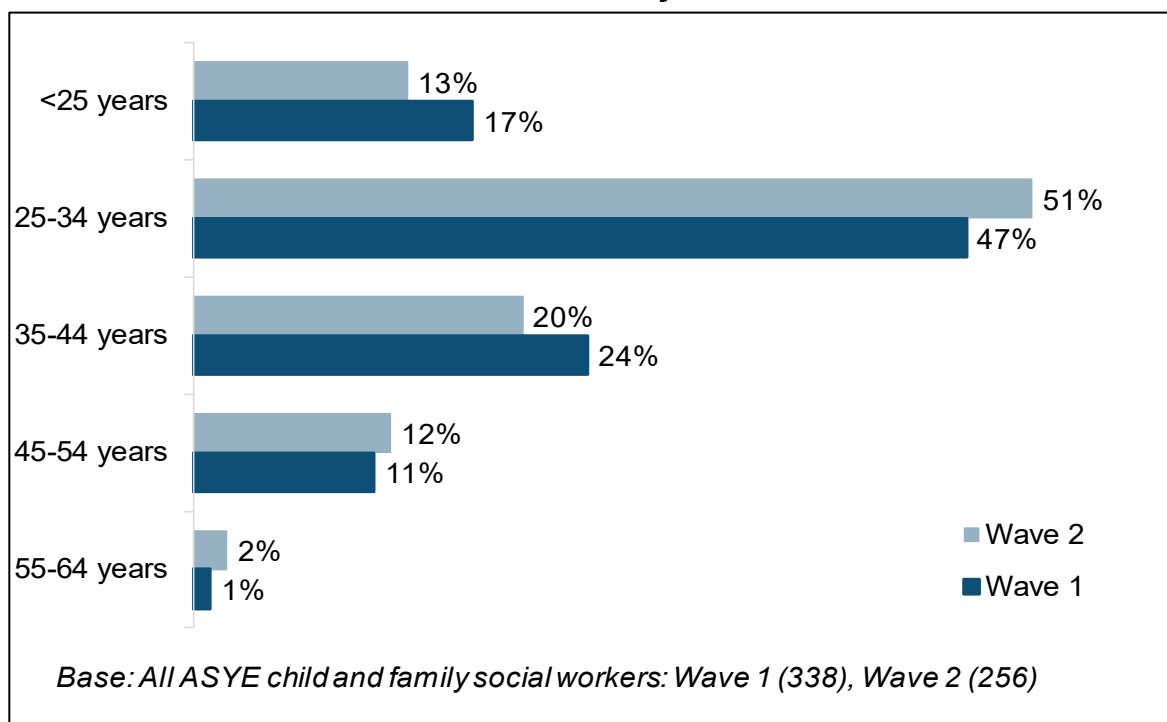
#### Ethnicity

Three-quarters of social workers on their ASYE who took part in the Wave 2 survey were White (75%), and one in eight were Black (13%). Very few respondents were Asian or of Mixed ethnic background, both at three per cent. These results are in line with ASYEs in Wave 1 (Figure 7.2).

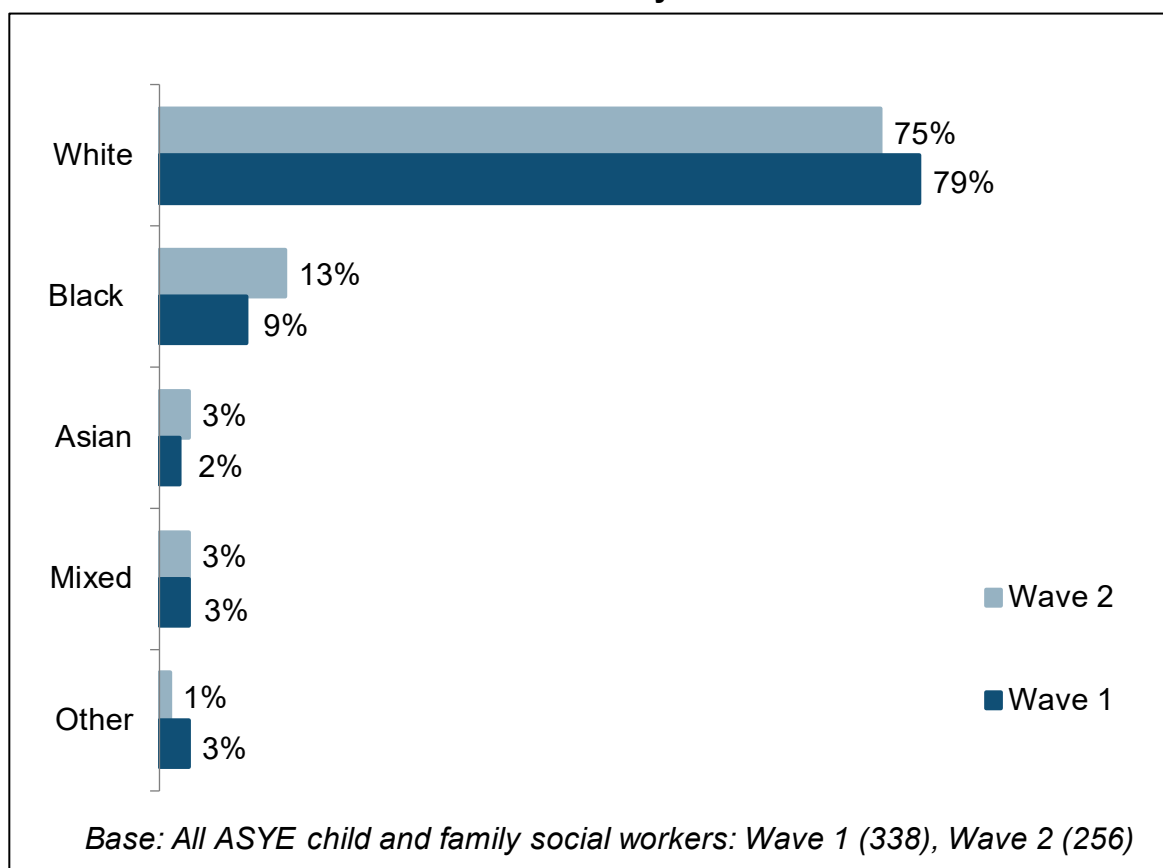
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<sup>20</sup> [DfE Children's social work workforce data 2019](#)

**Figure 7.1 Age profile of ASYE child and family social workers who participated in the survey**



**Figure 7.2 Ethnicity of ASYE child and family social workers who participated in the survey**



## **Disability or long-term health condition**

At Wave 2, a small number (15%) of ASYE social workers reported that they had a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition (defined as one that had lasted 12 months or more); the majority (84%) reported that they did not have such a condition. This is consistent with the proportion of ASYE social workers with a physical or mental health condition at Wave 1 (82% did not have such a condition and 15% did).

## **Caring responsibilities**

Just less than half (48%) of ASYE social workers who took part in the Wave 2 survey had some form of caring or childcare responsibilities. Most commonly, these social workers cared for school-aged children (36%), while a smaller proportion (13%) cared for other family members. This is consistent with ASYEs in Wave 1.

ASYE social workers aged between 45-54 years were the most likely to report having caring responsibilities (84%), closely followed by those aged 35-44 years (81%). As to be expected those under 25 years were the least likely to have caring responsibilities (9%). Those aged 35-44 years were most likely to care for school aged children (74%, compared with 36% on average across all ages).

## **Entry routes into local authority child and family social work**

An important part of the research was to explore what attracted people to pursue a career in child and family social work. This section explores:

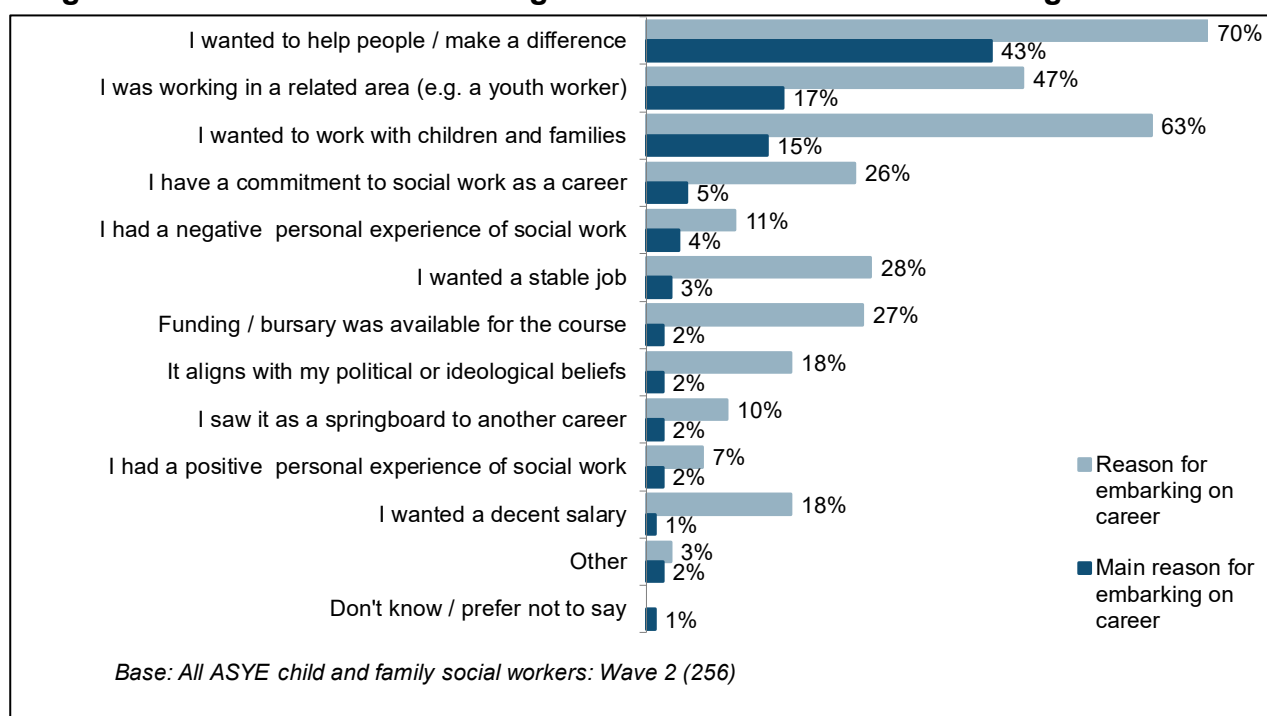
- motivations for becoming a child and family social worker among the latest ASYE cohort;
- qualification entry routes into the profession and their perceived effectiveness in terms of how well-prepared people felt for the role; and
- whether ASYE social workers came straight into the profession after qualifying.

## **Motivations for becoming a social worker**

ASYE social workers were asked to cite all the reasons they had for wanting to work in the profession, followed by their main motivation. As shown in Figure 7.3, reasons for embarking on a career in social work focussed on wanting to help people/make a difference (the main reason for 43% of ASYE social workers, and a factor for 70%), followed by wanting to work with children and families (the main reason for only 15%, but a contributing factor for 63%). Just less than half (47%) reported that previously working in a related area, such as a youth worker, was a factor influencing their decision to become a social worker, 17% saying that it was their main motivation. These results were consistent with the ASYE social worker cohort in Wave 1.



**Figure 7.3 Reasons for embarking on a career in social work among new ASYEs**



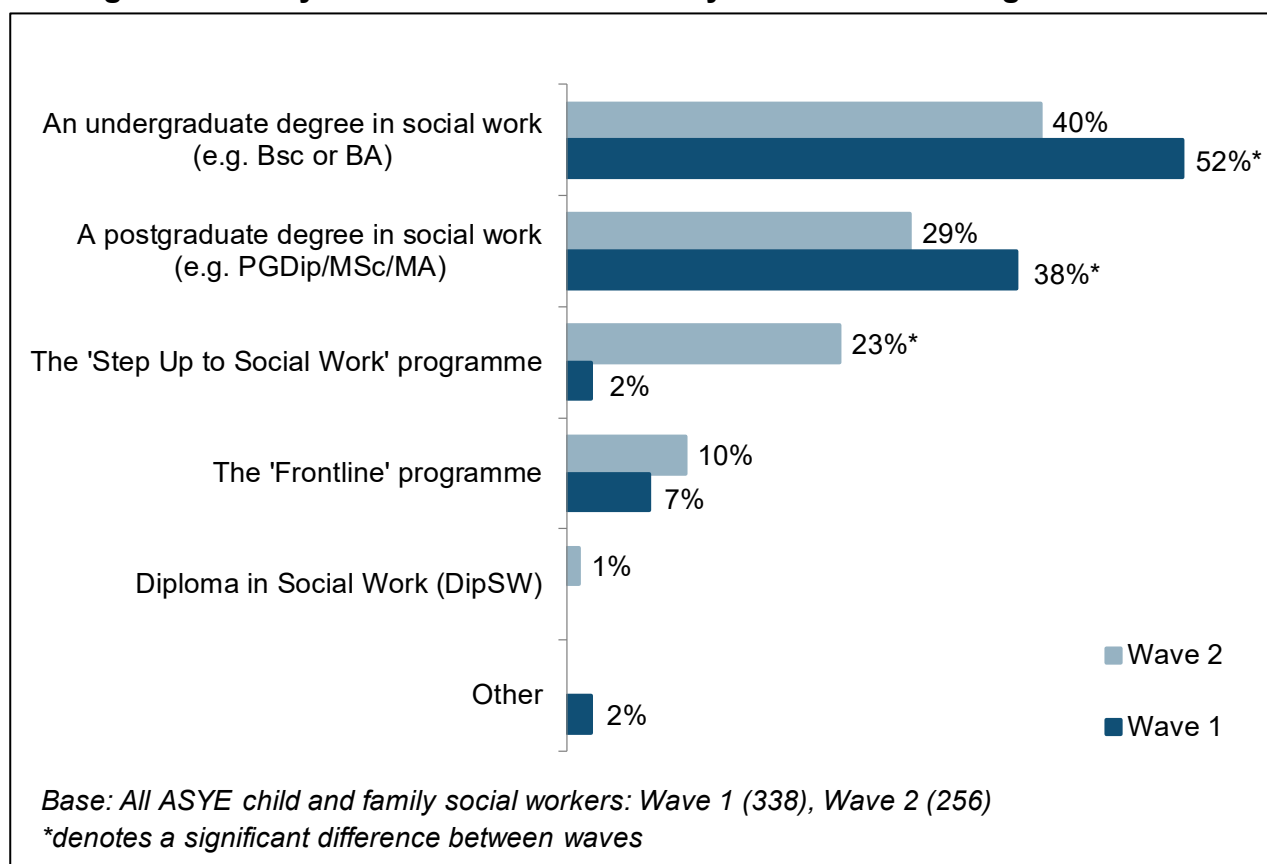
Further frequently stated reasons for embarking on a career in social work included: wanting a stable job (28%), funding/bursaries being available for the course (27%) and a long-term commitment to social work as a career (26%). However, these reasons were rarely reported as their main motivation for pursuing a career in social work.

## Qualification routes into the profession

All ASYE social workers were asked about the qualifications they had taken to enter the social work profession i.e. the qualification(s) that first enabled them to register as a social worker (multiple responses were possible). There are a number of ways through which people can become a qualified social worker.

As shown in Figure 7.4, the most common entry route into child and family social work was through a degree qualification in social work; an undergraduate degree (40%) or a postgraduate degree (29%). Around one-quarter (23%) entered through the 'Step Up to Social Work' programme; significantly higher compared to the Wave 1 cohort (2%). This is to be expected as the programme does not run annually so very few were on their ASYE in Wave 1. The most recent cohort of participants finished their training in March 2019, which explains why the proportion is much higher in Wave 2. One in ten (10%) entered via the Frontline programme.

**Figure 7.4 Entry route into child and family social work among new ASYEs**



For ASYE social workers who entered the social work profession through an undergraduate degree, there was a fairly equal spread across classifications. The most common classification achieved was a 2:1 (36%), compared with three in ten (30%) achieving a 2:2 and one in four achieving a first (25%). This was consistent with ASYE social workers in Wave 1.

Of those who entered the profession with a postgraduate degree in social work, a larger difference can be seen across classifications achieved. The most common classification achieved was a Merit, with more than a third (38%) of ASYE respondents achieving this. Almost one in five (18%) gained the highest classification, a Distinction; with 15% of respondents gaining a Pass. Some said they were marked on the first-third class grading scale; 12% received a 2:1, six per cent first class honours two per cent a 2:2. There were no significant differences between the results for Wave 1 and Wave 2 ASYE cohorts.

Two thirds (60%) of respondents entered the profession having completed an undergraduate degree in a different subject prior to their degree in social work. Of those who entered having completed a different undergraduate degree, social science degree subjects such as psychology or sociology were the most common (42%). Other, less commonly mentioned subjects included: biology (13%), languages (10%), and history (9%). These results were comparable with the subjects studied by ASYE respondents in Wave 1 cohort.

## Views on the effectiveness of different qualification routes

New ASYE social workers were asked their views on how well they thought their qualification had prepared them for a career in social work in general, and specifically for working in child and family social work. As seen in Figure 7.5, overall ASYE social workers typically felt well-prepared for a career in social work (81%), with slightly fewer (77%) reporting they felt well-prepared for a career in child and family social work specifically. These findings are consistent with ASYE social workers in Wave 1.

**Figure 7.5 ASYE child and family social workers' views on how well they felt their entry route into social work prepared them for social work**

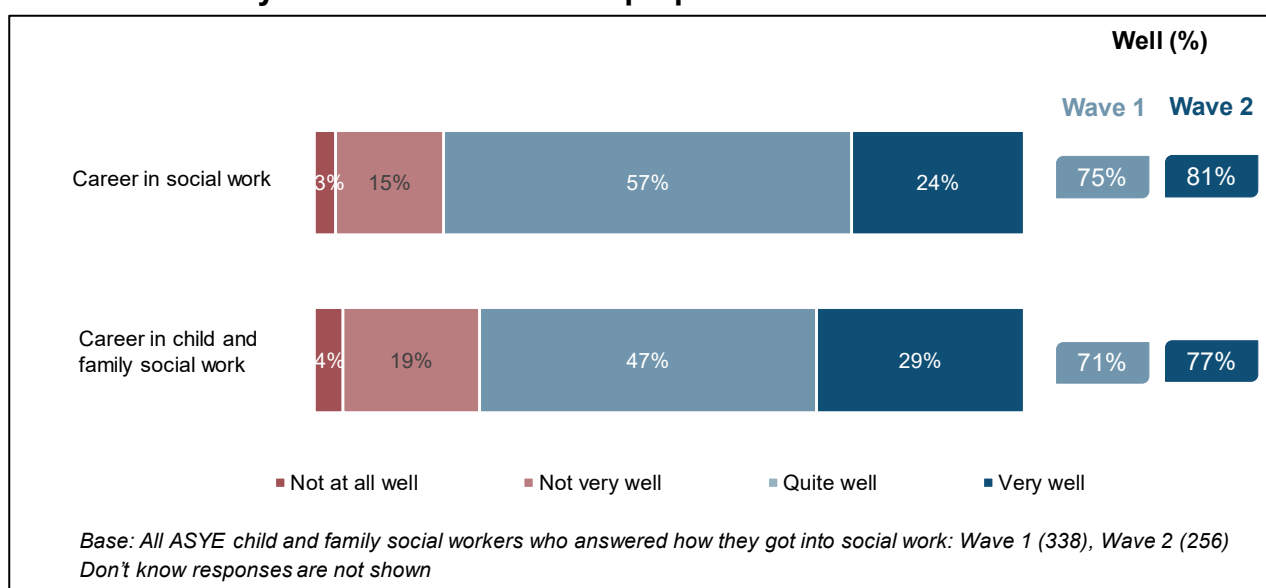
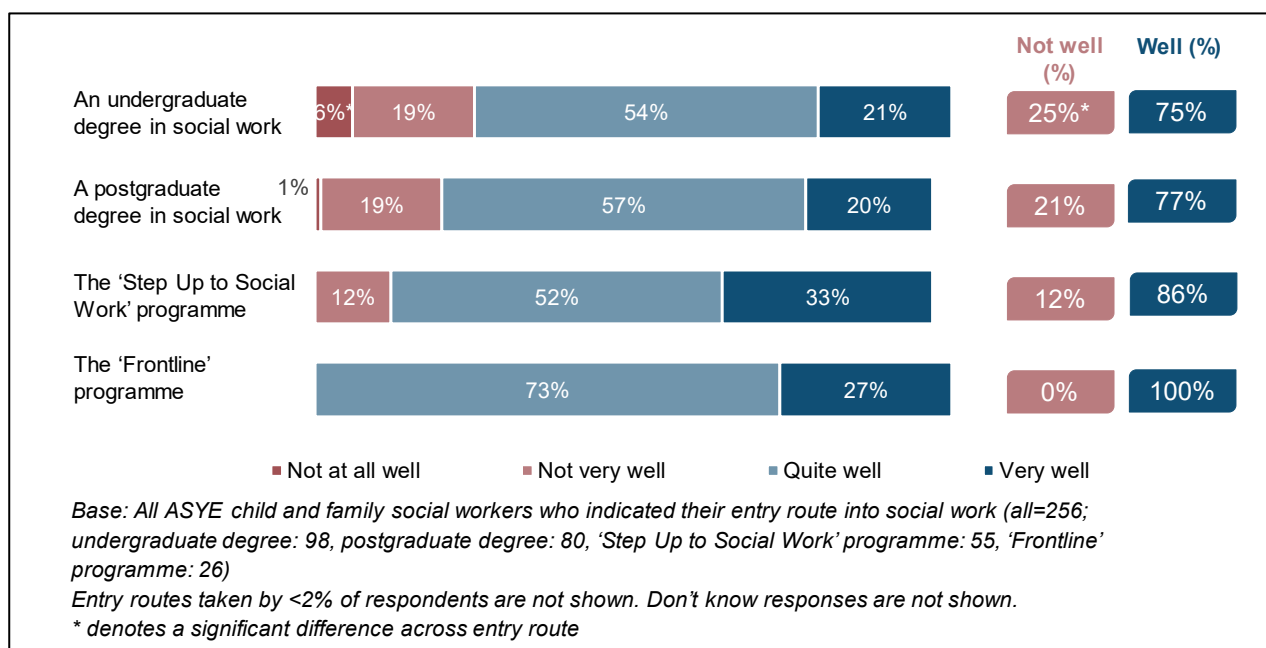


Figure 7.6 shows how well prepared ASYEs felt for a career in social work, by their entry route. While, at an overall level the majority of those who qualified with an undergraduate degree in social work (75%) felt well-prepared for a career in social work, they were the most likely to report they were unprepared. Of those who qualified with an undergraduate degree, six per cent felt not at all well-prepared for their career, compared with three per cent average. Although those entering through the 'Step Up to Social Work' and 'Frontline' programmes appear more likely to have felt well prepared than those entering through an undergraduate or postgraduate programme, these differences are not statistically significant due to the small number of respondents in the 'Step Up...' (55) and 'Frontline' (26) categories.

**Figure 7.6 ASYE child and family social workers' views on how well they felt their entry route prepared them for social work, by entry route**



## Current employment and career history

This section explores ASYE social workers' professional career to date, starting with the areas of social work they have worked in and how much time they have spent working in the social work profession.

After qualifying as a registered social worker, the vast majority (81%) had their first job in social work in the area of child and family social work. Since qualifying, 19% of ASYE social workers have worked in other areas of social work besides child and family, and only nine per cent have worked outside of social work altogether.

Of the 48 ASYE social workers who had worked elsewhere in social work, it was most common to work in adult social care (17). Findings here reflected those in Wave 1, where 45 ASYE social workers had worked elsewhere before they started in social work, with the most common area being adult social care (16).

## Workplace well-being

This section explores ASYE well-being by considering working hours and caseloads, reported stress levels and workload demands, views on the extent of managerial support for work-life balance, and access to flexible working arrangements.

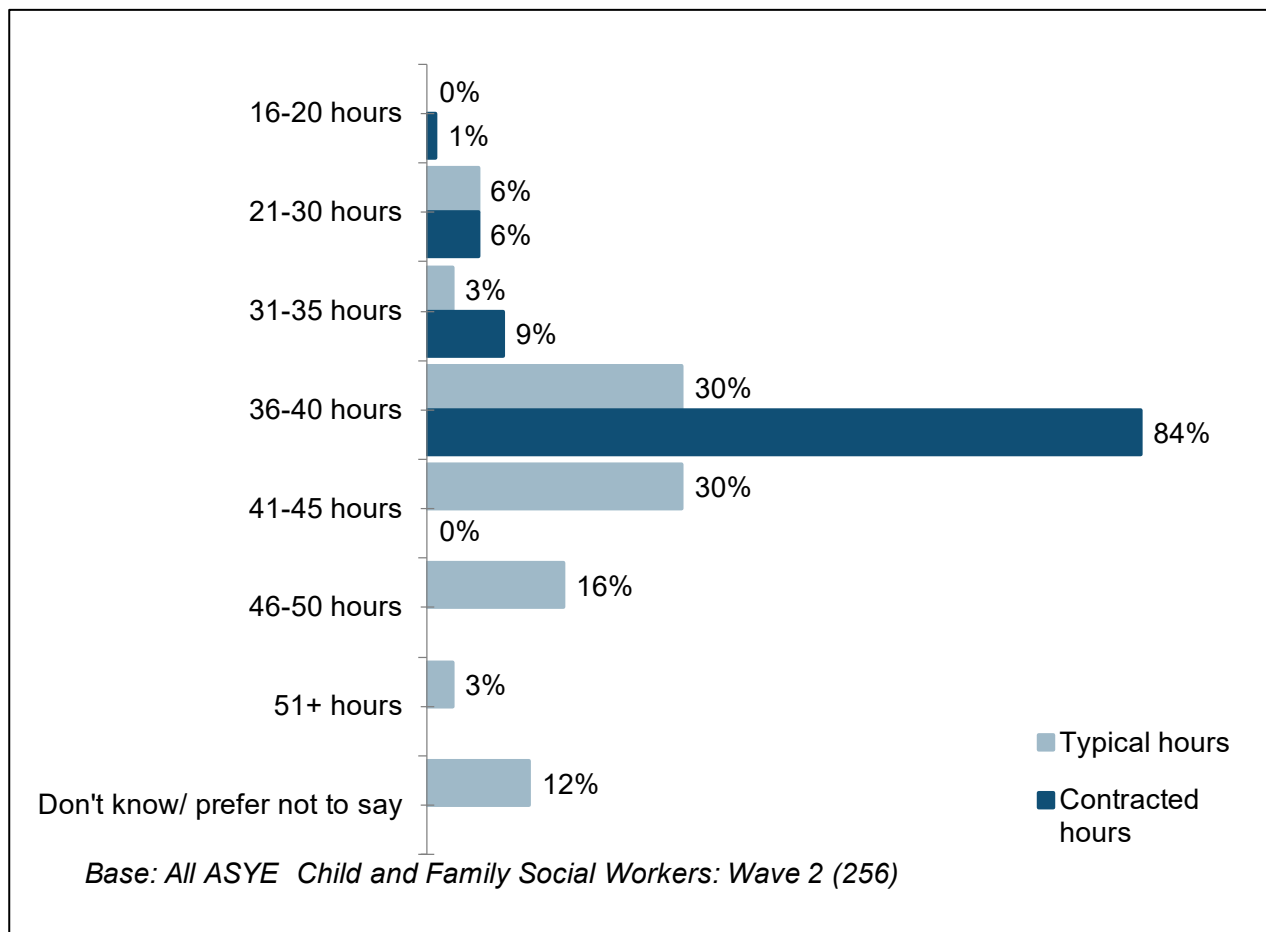
## Contracted and actual working hours

ASYE social workers were asked how many hours they were contracted to work per week. Throughout this section full-time work is considered to be more than 35 hours and part-time as any range between 1-35 hours, recognising that 31-35 hours is on the cusp of full-time work.

The large majority of new ASYE social workers were contracted to work full-time, with 84% contracted to work 36-40 hours per week and one ASYE social worker saying that they were contracted to work for 41-45 hours. A minority were contracted to work part-time hours: nine per cent for 31-35 hours, and six per cent for 21-30 hours. Contracted hours for Wave 1 ASYE social workers were consistent with Wave 2.

Figure 7.7 illustrates the stark contrast between contracted hours and actual hours worked in a typical week: almost half (49%) of ASYE social workers stated that they worked for 41 hours or more (30% 41-45 hours, 16% 46-50 hours, and three per cent 51+ hours), despite only one ASYE social worker being contracted to work more than 40 hours.

**Figure 7.7 ASYE hours worked in a typical week versus hours contracted to work**

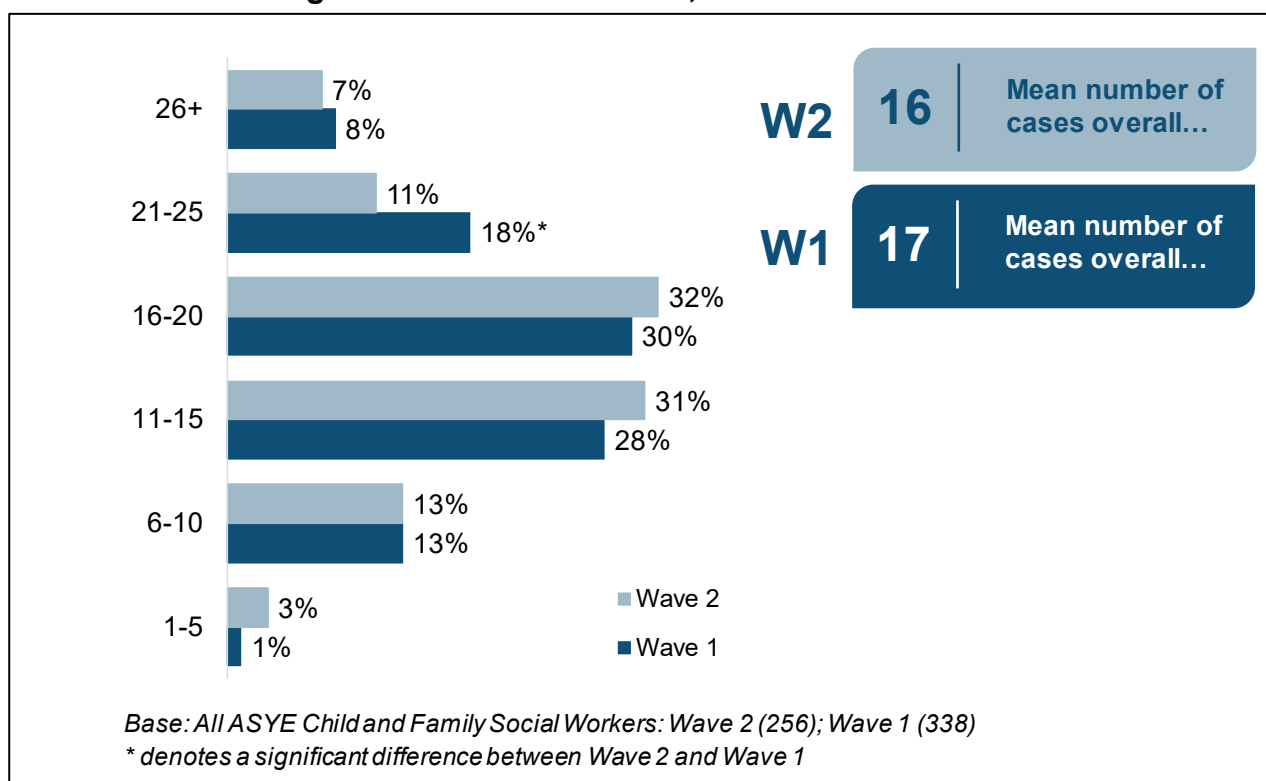


Exploring typical working hours in more detail, four-fifths (79%) stated that they typically work 36+ hours per week, most commonly 36-40 hours (30%) and 41-45 hours (30%). Compared to non-ASYE social workers, ASYEs were more likely to work 36-40 hours per week than others (24%), although non-ASYEs were more likely to work 51+ hours per week (seven per cent, compared with three per cent of ASYEs). A smaller proportion (3%) reported typically working part-time for 31-35 hours, or 21-30 hours (6%), whilst 12% said they did not know or preferred not to disclose. Results are consistent with Wave 1.

## Caseloads

ASYE social workers were asked how many cases they were currently allocated<sup>21</sup>. They were most likely to fall into the ranges of 16-20 cases (32%) and 11-15 cases (31%), with the mean number of reported cases being 16. 18% had more than 20 cases (11% had 21-25 and seven per cent had 26+) and 16% of ASYEs had 10 or fewer cases (13% had 6-10 and three per cent had 1-5). This compares with a mean of 17 cases for ASYEs in Wave 1.

**Figure 7.8 ASYE caseloads, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



<sup>21</sup> Cases were defined as “an individual allocated to a social worker (for example a family of three siblings would be three individual cases) and/or a carer or carers allocated to a social worker for the purposes of fostering or adoption.”

The caseload breakdown for Wave 1 ASYE respondents was generally consistent, although one fifth (18%) reported that the number of cases allocated to them was 21-25, significantly higher than the corresponding figure of 11% for Wave 2.

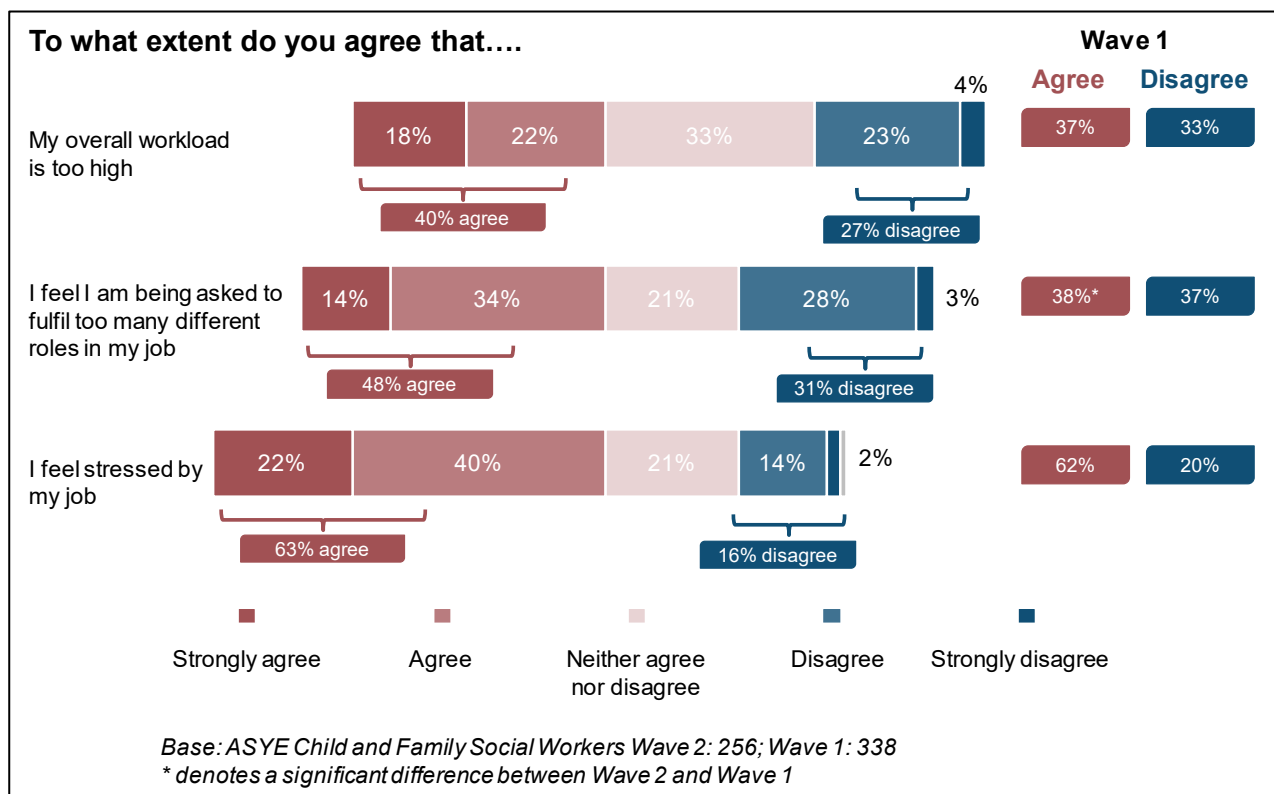
## Stress levels and workload demands

ASYE social workers were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- 'I feel stressed by my job'
- 'My overall workload is too high'
- 'I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job'.

As shown in Figure 7.9, in Wave 2, two-fifths (40%) agreed that 'My overall workload is too high', almost half (48%) agreed that 'I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job' (significantly higher than the Wave 1 figure of 38%), and nearly two-thirds (63%) agreed with the statement 'I feel stressed in my job', whilst only one-in-six (16%) disagreed.

**Figure 7.9 ASYE agreement levels regarding stress and workload demands, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



## Reasons for feeling stressed

Those who agreed with the statement 'I feel stressed by my work' were asked what factors they felt were causing this stress and to identify the main factor, if there was more than one.

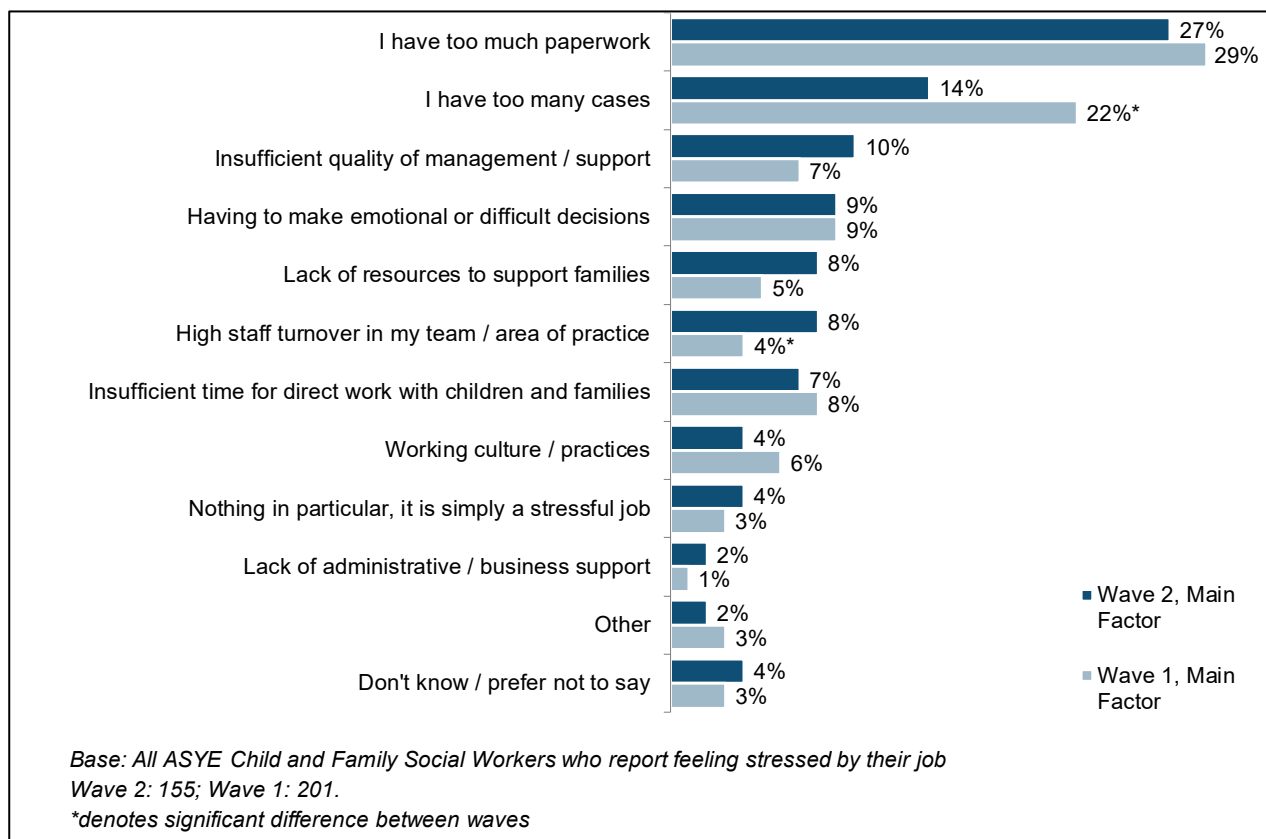
The top three issues among ASYEs were: too much paperwork (72%); insufficient time for direct work with children and families (60%); and lack of resources to support families (51%), which was significantly higher than in Wave 1, where only 33% of ASYEs cited a lack of resources. Two-in-five referred to 'too many cases' (42%); 'high staff turnover in my team/ area' (41%); and 'working culture/ practices' (40%).

Figure 7.10 compares the single main factors identified by Wave 2 and Wave 1 ASYE respondents, (among those who indicated feeling stressed by their job), and shows that the two single main factors for both cohorts were 'I have too much paperwork' (27% in Wave 2 compared with 29% in Wave 1), and 'I have too many cases' (14% in Wave 2 and 22% in Wave 1). Having too many cases was significantly less likely to be considered the main factor by Wave 2 respondents. The only other significant difference between waves was that Wave 2 respondents were more likely to refer to 'high staff turnover in my team/ area of practice' than were Wave 1 respondents (8% compared with four per cent); otherwise the pattern of response was consistent.

The Wave 2 cohort, who were further along their career journey than the ASYE sample, also cited too much paperwork (22%) and having too many cases many cases (24%) as the main reasons for feeling stressed, although significantly more cited too many cases than in the ASYE sample (14%), which reflects the reduced caseload for ASYE social workers. Further, more non-ASYE social workers cited working culture and practices than the ASYE sample (nine per cent compared with four per cent), indicating that this becomes more of an issue for social workers the longer they are in the profession.



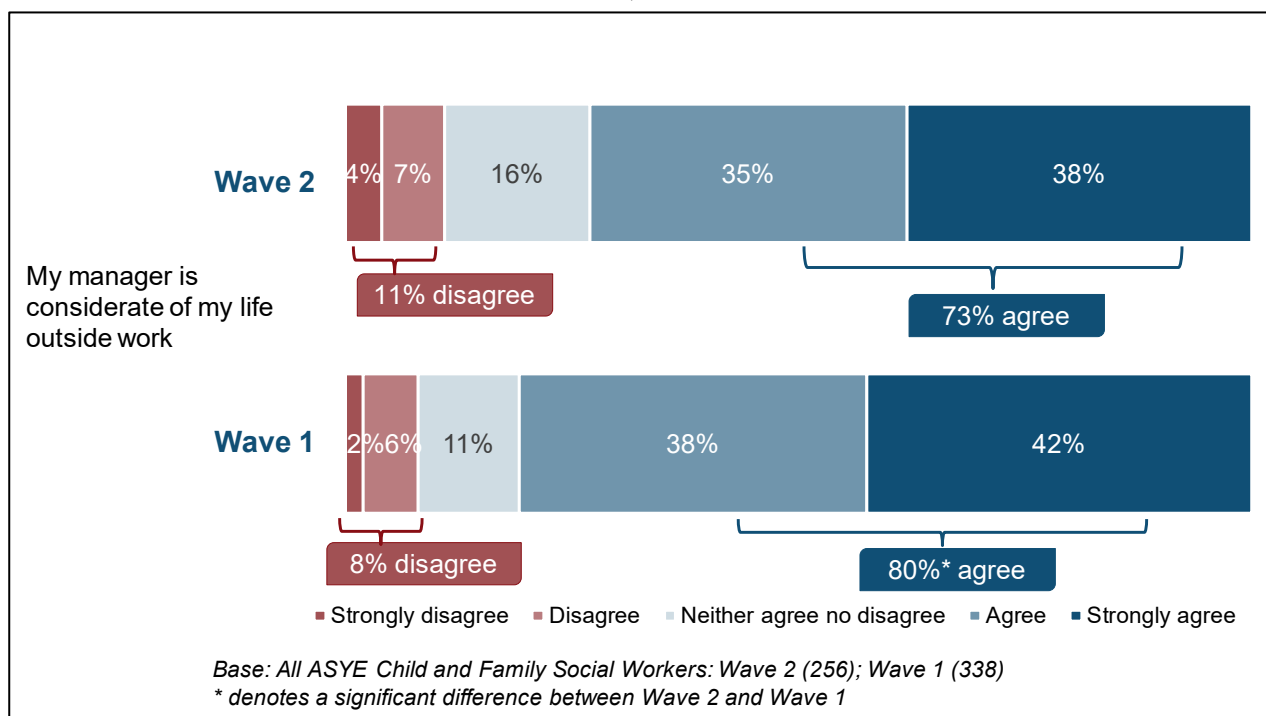
**Figure 7.10 Main reason why ASYEs feel stressed by their job, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



## Manager consideration of work-life balance

Despite the high proportion of ASYE social workers who were working more than their contracted hours, nearly three-quarters (73%) of Wave 2 ASYE workers agreed that 'my manager is considerate of my life outside work' (38% 'strongly agree' and 35% 'agree'), whilst 16% were neutral and one in nine (11%) disagreed (Figure 7.11). However, levels of agreement have reduced compared with ASYEs in Wave 1 (from 80% to 73%).

**Figure 7.11 Extent of ASYEs' agreement that their manager is considerate of their life outside of work, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



## Use of various flexible working arrangements

ASYE social workers were also asked about whether they had made use of flexible working arrangements at their current employer, specifically time off in lieu (TOIL), flexi-time, paid overtime and job-sharing. TOIL was the most commonly used arrangement by both Wave 2 and Wave 1 ASYE social workers, mentioned by 78% and 73%, respectively. Just over half of Wave 2 respondents had used 'flexi-time' (51%), one in ten (10%) had used 'paid overtime', and only two per cent had used job sharing, whilst eight per cent said that they had not used any of these arrangements. There were no significant differences between cohorts.

## Views on employer, manager and working environment

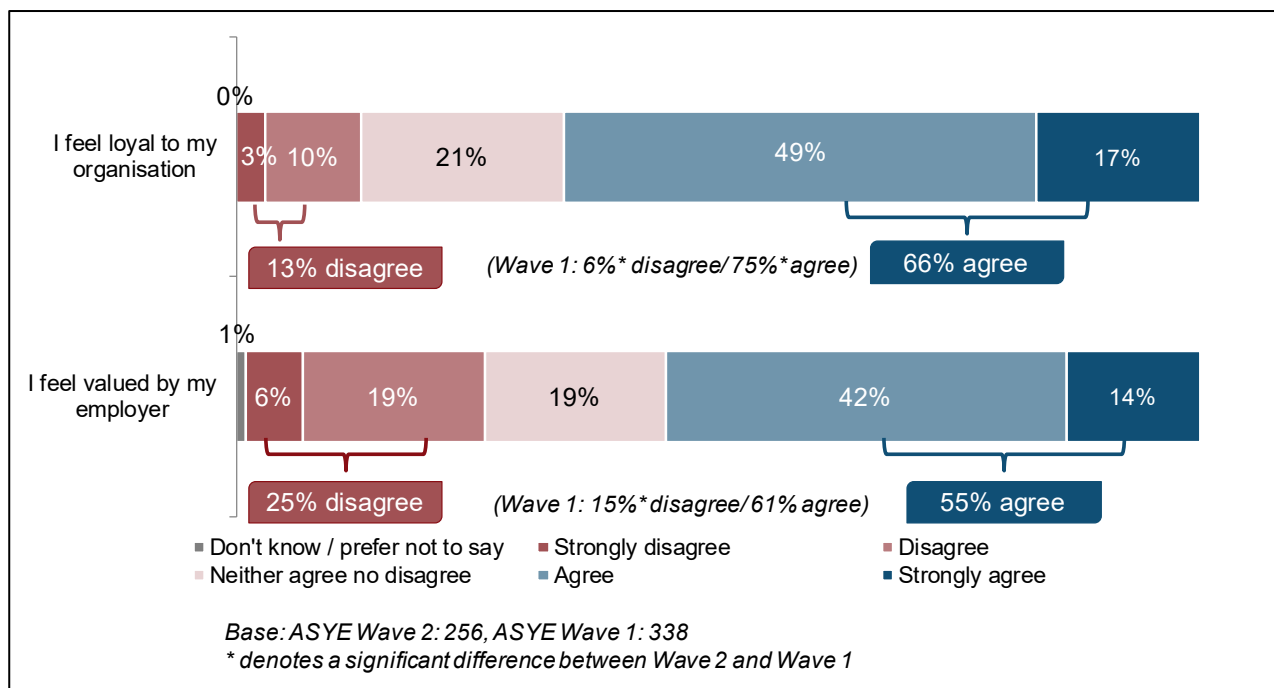
This section explores ASYE social workers' day-to-day experiences in terms of their feelings of loyalty to and being valued by their employer; relationship with their

managers; experiences of receiving and providing reflective supervision; access to learning and development opportunities, and views on the resources at their disposal and their working environment.

## Feeling valued by and loyal to their employer

Wave 2 ASYE social workers were asked the extent to which they felt loyal to, and valued by, their employer. As shown in Figure 7.12, loyalty to the organisation was fairly high (66% agreed that they felt loyal, while 13% disagreed) – though agreement was lower and disagreement higher compared with the Wave 1 figures (75% ‘agree’/ six per cent ‘disagree’). Just over half of ASYE social workers felt valued by their employer (55%, not significantly different from the Wave 1 figure of 61%). One-quarter (25%) did not feel valued, significantly higher than for Wave 1 respondents (15%). Loyalty was highest amongst those aged 25 years or below (90% reported feeling ‘loyal’, compared with 66% on average) and those aged between 45-54 (84% reported feeling ‘loyal’). ASYE social workers overall felt less loyal than the Wave 2 cohort (66% felt loyal compared with 75%).

**Figure 7.12 ASYE social workers’ perceptions of loyalty to and feeling valued by their employer, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



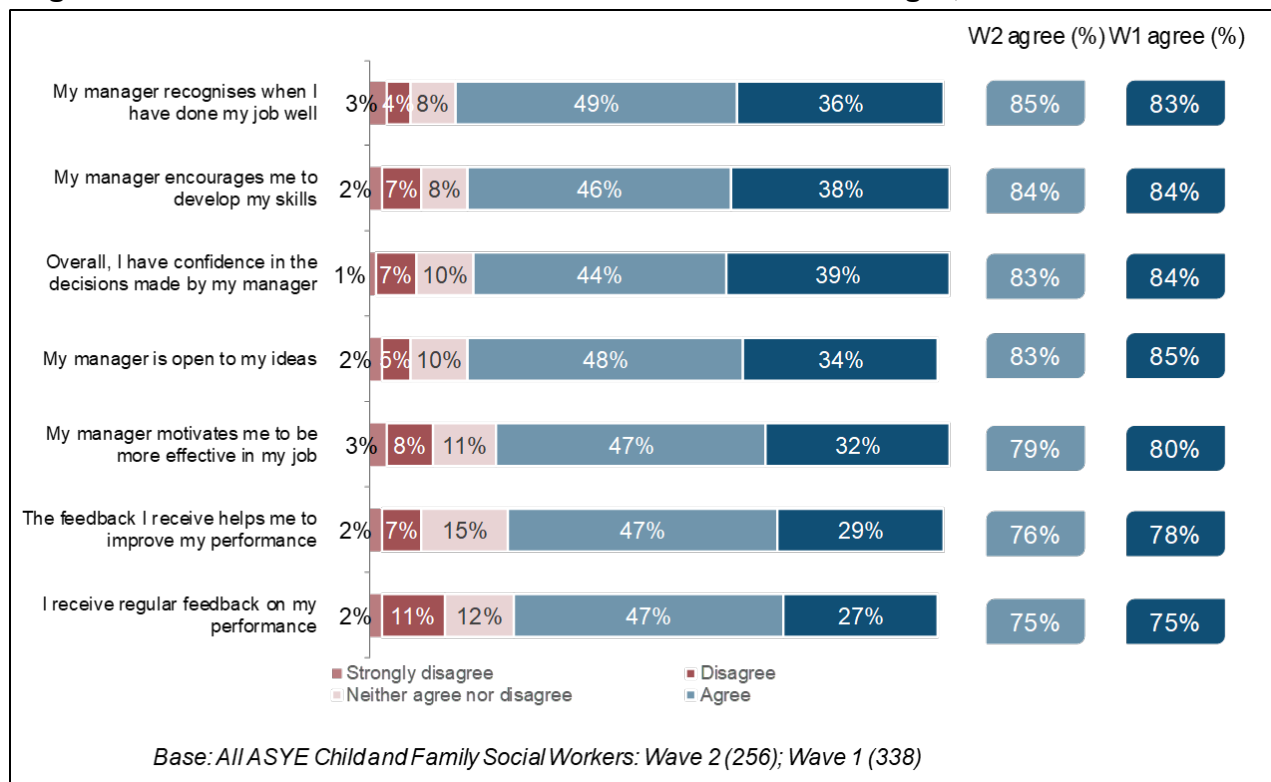
## Views on line management

ASYE social workers were asked about various aspects of their relationship with their line manager(s). Figure 7.13 shows that Wave 2 ASYE respondents were generally very positive about their manager, with three-quarters or more expressing agreement with each statement. Agreement levels were greatest in respect of managers recognising

when they had done their job well (85%), encouraging development of their skills (84%), being open to ideas (83%) and respondents having confidence in the decisions made by their manager (83%).

Respondents were less positive about feedback received from their manager, in terms of both frequency and quality: 75% agreed that they received regular feedback on their performance, and 76% that the feedback received helped them to improve their performance. Four-fifths of respondent (79%) agreed that their manager motivates them to be more effective in their job. Views on line management were consistent across Waves 1 and 2.

**Figure 7.13 ASYE social workers' views on their line manager, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



## Experiences of receiving reflective supervision

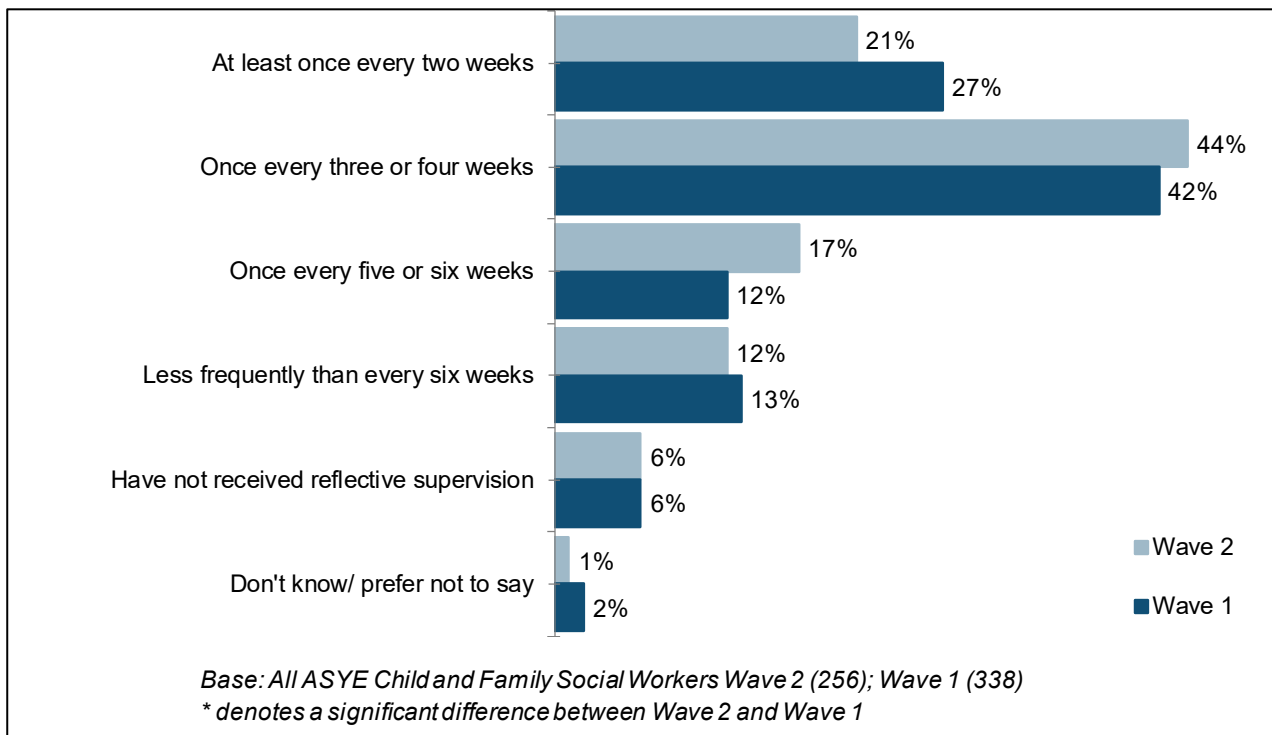
Exploring ASYE social workers' experience of reflective supervision is important in understanding perceptions of professional development and performance management.

### Receiving reflective supervision

Overall there was a wide variation in the amount of reflective supervision received by ASYE social workers (Figure 7.14). Around two in five respondents received reflective supervision every three to four weeks (44%), with another one in five receiving it at least once every two weeks (21%); two thirds (65%) at least every four weeks. Of those who

receive supervision less frequently, one in six (17%) receive it once every five or six weeks, 12% 'less frequently than every six weeks', and six per cent had not received any reflective supervision at all. Wave 1 findings were not significantly different to those for Wave 2.

**Figure 7.14 Frequency of receiving reflective supervision among ASYEs, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



## Amount and quality of reflective supervision

Those ASYE social workers who have received reflective supervision were asked their views on the amount and quality of supervision received. In terms of amount of supervision, although two-thirds (64%) felt that the amount received was 'about right', one-third (34%) said it was 'not enough', and only two per cent said they have received 'too much'. Wave 1 figures were almost identical here.

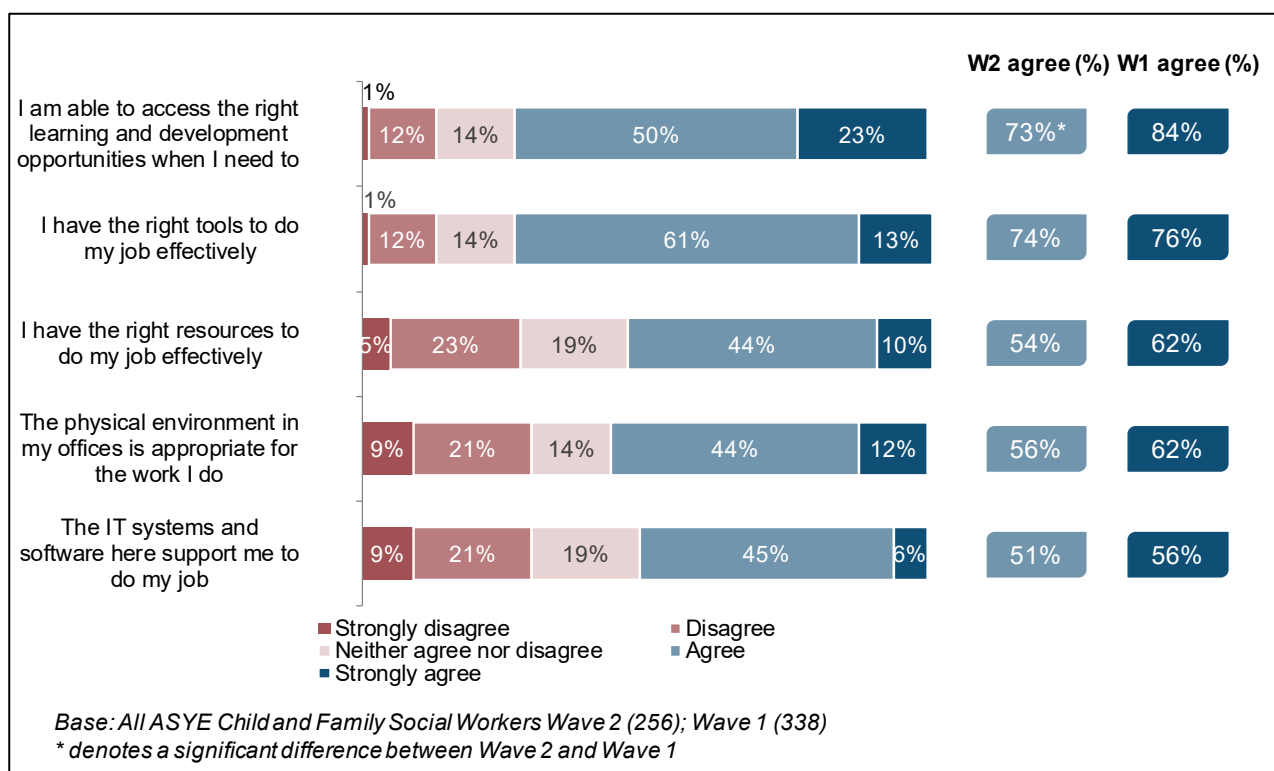
As to be expected, ASYE social workers received reflective supervision more frequently than the Wave 2 cohort. ASYEs were far more likely to receive supervision at least once every two weeks (21% compared with four per cent) and less likely to receive it less frequently than every six weeks (12% compared with 23%).

Regarding the quality of supervision received, this was rated as 'good' by the large majority of Wave 2 respondents concerned (81%; not significantly different to the Wave 1 figure of 87%); however, significantly more rated the quality as poor, compared to Wave 1 (16% compared with 10% at Wave 1).

## Views on working environment, resources and access to learning and development opportunities

The survey included five agree/disagree questions to elicit ASYE social workers' views on their working environment, resources to help them do their jobs, and access to learning/ development (Figure 7.15). Wave 2 ASYE social workers were most positive about having the right tools to do their job effectively (74% agreed that they did) and having access to the right learning and development opportunities (73% agreed). However, significantly fewer agreed that they had access to these learning opportunities than the Wave 1 ASYE cohort (84%).

**Figure 7.15 ASYE views on working environment and resources, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



Smaller majorities expressed agreement with the remaining three statements: 56% agreed that 'the physical environment in my offices is appropriate for the work I do', 54% agreed that 'I have the right resources to do my job effectively', and 51% agreed that 'the IT systems and software here support me to do my job'; and for each of these latter three statements a substantial minority (27-30%) of respondents disagreed.

## Job satisfaction

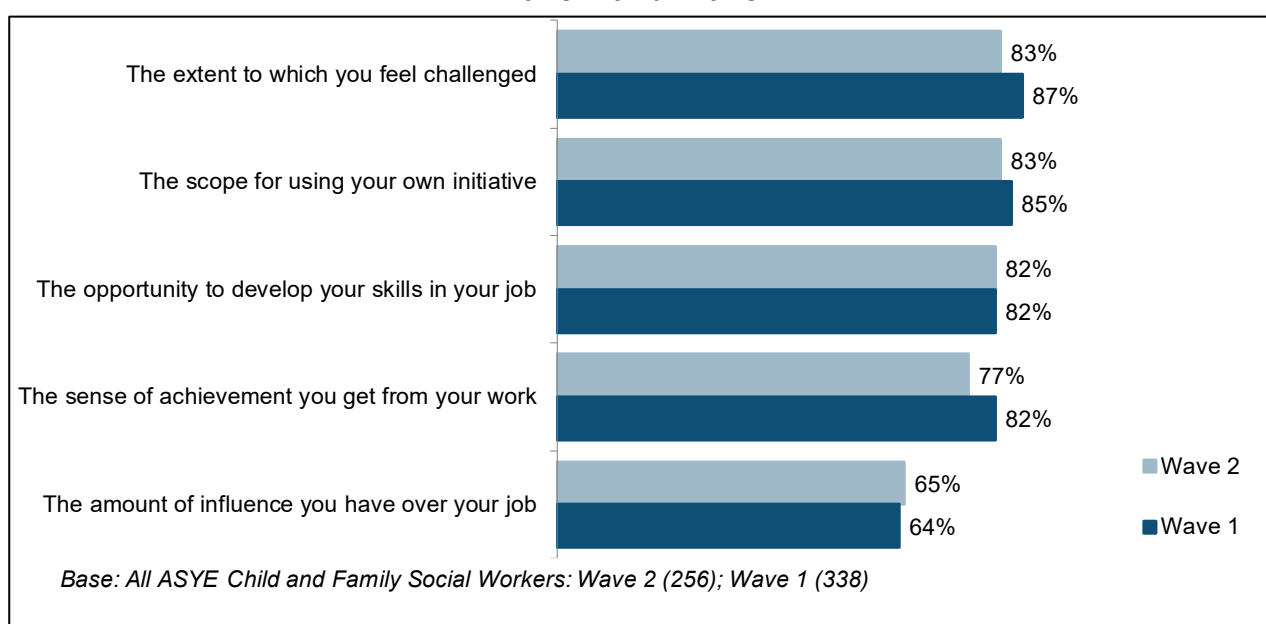
This section examines how satisfied ASYE social workers were with various aspects of their job, and overall.

### Aspects of the job

ASYE social workers were asked how satisfied they were with various aspects of their jobs. As shown in Figure 7.16, the majority (around two-thirds or more across all aspects) were satisfied with each aspect of their day-to-day job.

Satisfaction for Wave 2 ASYE social workers was highest for having scope to use their own initiative (83%) and the extent to which they feel challenged (83%), closely followed by having the opportunity to develop their skills in their job (82%). Just over three-quarters (77%) were satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work, and 65% were satisfied with the amount of influence they have over their job. These measures were consistent with views of Wave 1 ASYE social workers.

**Figure 7.16 ASYE social workers' satisfaction with various aspects of their job, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



### Overall job satisfaction

ASYE social workers were asked the extent to which they agreed that they found their current job was satisfying. Over two-thirds (68%) agreed that they were satisfied (18% 'strongly agree' and 49% 'agree'), whilst 15% disagreed (six per cent 'strongly disagree' and nine per cent 'disagree'). This level of agreement is somewhat lower than the figure of 75% for Wave 1 respondents but the difference is not statistically significant.

## Views on career progression

This section explores ASYE social workers' reflections on their career to date, including a look at the factors contributing to, and barriers hindering, career progression.

### Whether career progression has met expectations, so far

Whilst overall more than half of ASYE social workers (58%) considered their career progression to be 'in line with expectations' (consistent with the Wave 1 figure of 53%), they were slightly more likely to rate their career progression as 'below my expectations' (10%) than 'above my expectations' (six per cent). Nearly one-quarter (22%) felt it was too early to make this judgement, and three per cent said that they did not have any expectations about career progression. There were no statistically significant changes compared with Wave 1 results.

### Perceived enablers to career progression

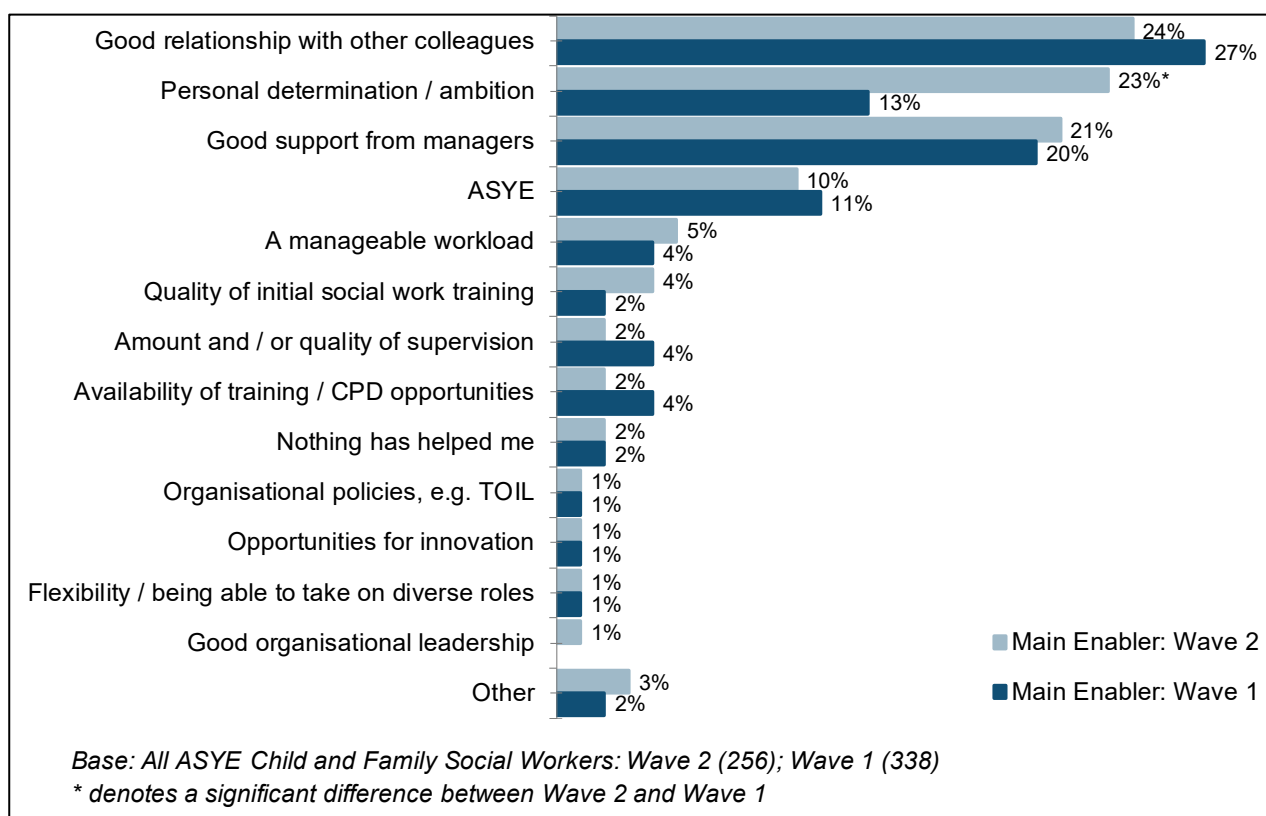
After rating their career progression, ASYE social workers considered which factors helped them to progress in their career, followed by the one main factor (Figure 7.17).

The three most frequently mentioned main enablers to career progression among Wave 2 ASYE social workers were 'good relationship with other colleagues' (24%), 'personal determination/ ambition' (23%), and 'good support from managers' (21%). This was followed by doing the ASYE itself (10%), followed by 'a manageable workload' (5%), and 'quality of initial social work training' (four per cent). Note that 'personal determination/ ambition' was significantly more likely to be thought of as the main enabler by Wave 2 ASYEs compared with those in Wave 1 (23% compared with 13%).

Those who had entered through a postgraduate degree were more likely to value the ASYE as a main enabler to career progression than those who entered through a different route (20% who undertook a postgraduate degree said that it was a main enabler, compared with 10% on average).



**Figure 7.17 Main enablers to career progression for ASYE social workers, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



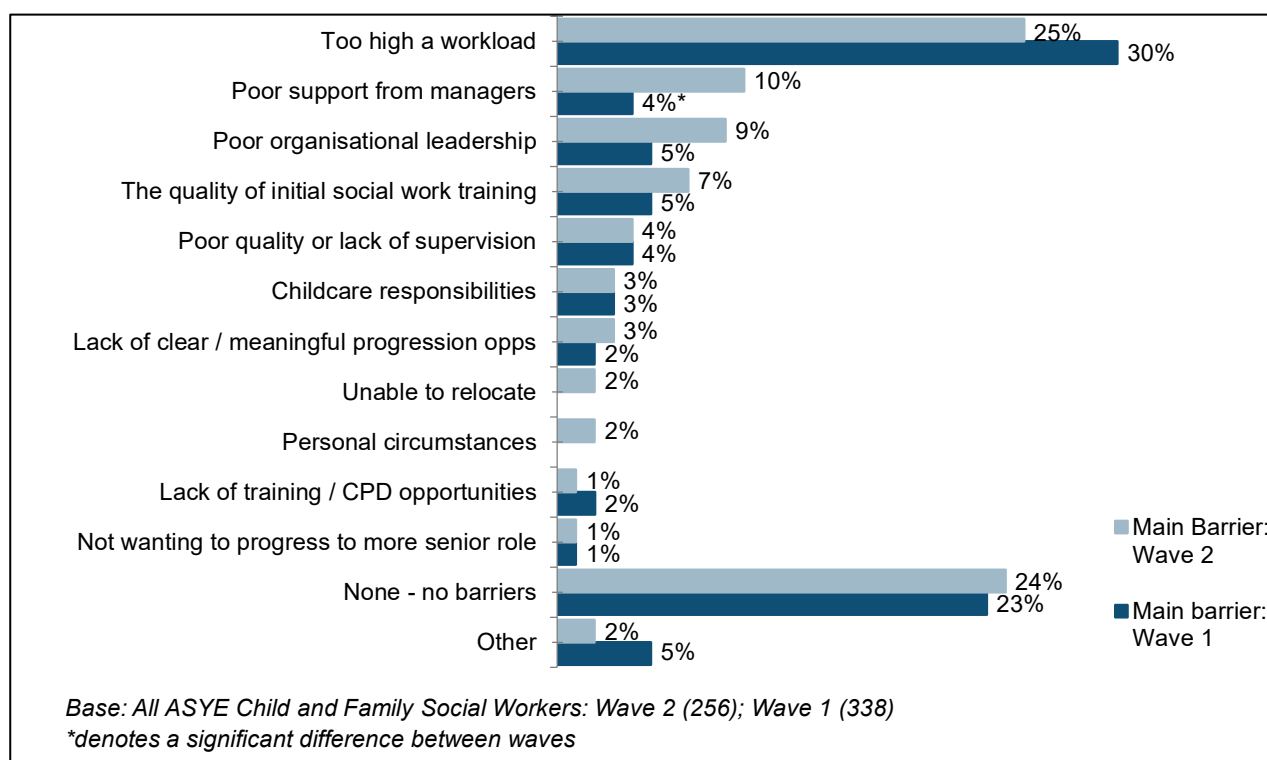
## Perceived barriers to career progression

Whilst almost one-quarter (24%) of Wave 2 ASYE social workers felt that there are no barriers to their career progression, most respondents did mention barriers, with the principal main barrier perceived to be ‘too high a workload’ (25%) (Figure 7.18).

Around one-in-ten respondents said that ‘poor support from managers’ (10%) and ‘poor organisational leadership’ (nine per cent) was the main barrier to their career progression, whilst smaller minorities referred to the ‘initial quality of social work training’ (7%), ‘poor quality or lack of supervision’ (4%), a ‘lack of clear/ meaningful progression opportunities’ (three per cent), and ‘childcare responsibilities’ (three per cent).

In comparison to Wave 1 there was one statistically significant difference in that Wave 2 respondents were more likely to say that ‘poor support from managers’ was their main barrier to career progression (10% compared with four per cent for Wave 1); otherwise responses for the two cohorts were consistent.

**Figure 7.18 ASYE social workers' reported main barriers to career progression, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



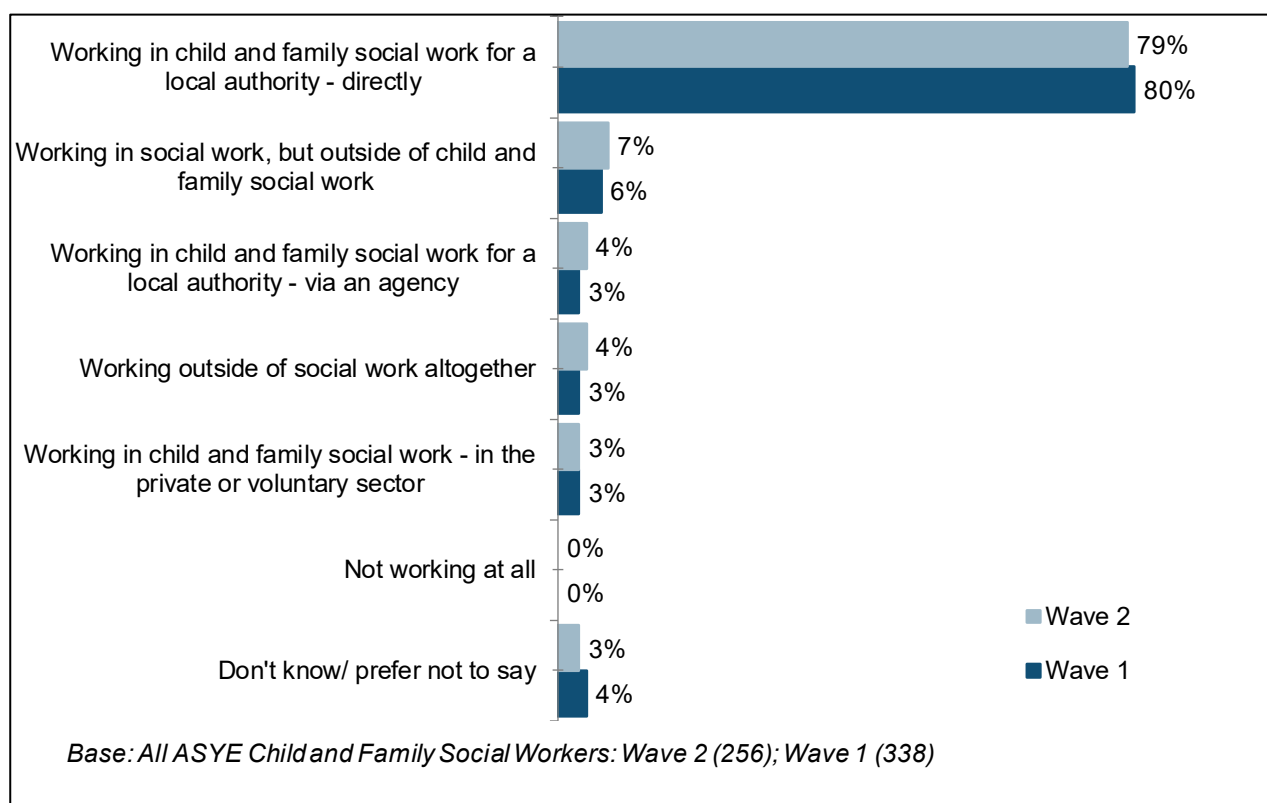
## Short-term career plans and reasons for wanting to leave social work

Identifying ASYE social workers' short-term career plans and reasons for leaving or wanting to leave their current positions is important to help to understand how retention might be improved. This chapter details career plans over the next 12 months, perceived transferability of social work skills outside the sector, reasons for leaving and potential influences on retention.

### Career plans in the next 12 months and beyond

All ASYE social workers were asked where they expected to be working in 12 months' time, if at all. Figure 7.19 shows that the majority (four in five, 79%) of Wave 2 ASYE social workers planned to be working directly in local authority child and family social work, with seven per cent planning to be 'working in social work, but outside of child and family social work', four per cent 'working in child and family social work for a local authority but via an agency', four per cent 'working outside of social work altogether', and three per cent 'working in child and family social work in the private or voluntary sector'. Results for the two cohorts were almost identical.

**Figure 7.19 Where ASYE social workers see themselves in 12 months' time, Wave 1 and Wave 2**



## Reasons for leaving or considering leaving child and family social work

The 28 Wave 2 ASYE respondents that were considering leaving or had left child and family social work were asked why, followed by their main reason if they provided more than one. Most ASYEs provided more than one reason for considering leaving, suggesting this is influenced by a combination of factors. Most likely to be mentioned as reasons were 'it is just not the right type of job for me' (10/28 respondents) and 'I don't like the culture of local authority social work' (9/28 respondents), whilst seven respondents each referred to 'the high caseload', 'the amount of paperwork', and 'it is not compatible with family or relationship commitments', and six respondents each referred to 'the working hours in general', and said 'I did not/am not making the best use of the skills or experience I have'.

When asked for the single main reason for leaving or considering leaving local authority social work, the most common reason cited was the dislike of the working culture (5/28 respondents), followed by 'it is just not the right type of job for me' (4/28), and 'it is not compatible with family or relationship commitments' (3/28).

In comparison, Wave 1 respondents (30) were generally more likely to refer to 'the high caseload', both as a reason and the main reason for leaving or considering leaving; however, results are indicative only due to the small numbers of respondents involved.

## Potential influences on ASYE retention

Wave 2 ASYE social workers who said they had left or were considering leaving (28 respondents) were asked what may encourage them to remain in or return to local authority child and family social work in future.

The most-mentioned factors related to remuneration and workloads: 'higher pay' [(16/28) said this would be a factor, and (4/28) said this would be the single main influence], 'a more manageable workload in terms of administration / paperwork' [ (14/28) 'factor'/ (4/28) 'main influence'], and 'a more manageable workload in terms of caseload' [(13/28) 'factor'/ (6/28) 'main influence'].

Seven other factors were mentioned fairly commonly, such as: 'better working culture' (9), 'the ability to work from home' (9), 'flexi-time' (8), 'the ability to take time off in lieu (TOIL)' (7), and 'other financial incentives such as overtime pay' (7). Of these factors 'better working culture' 14% (4/28) was most likely to be considered as a possible main influence on retention.

## 8. Conclusions

Wave 2 of the study has revealed changes in attitudes, jobs and work status although, as might be expected given that only about a year has passed since Wave 1, many aspects have remained fairly consistent.

**The vast majority of study participants were still employed in local authority child and family social work in Wave 2**, and among this group nine in ten were still working at the same local authority. One in six local authority child and family social workers had been promoted between Wave 1 and 2, including the majority of ASYEs from Wave 1 who have now moved into front line practitioner roles.

**Only a small minority of the sample had left local authority child and family social work between Wave 1 and Wave 2**; this may be due partly to the relatively short interval elapsing between surveys, and partly to a lower response among those who had left the profession. This will be explored more fully at Wave 3 when the study will seek to re-survey leavers who agreed to be re-contacted at that point. Half of those who had left local authority child and family social work were still employed in social work (either in child and family social work in the private or voluntary sector, or in another area of social work, e.g. adults).

**Most social workers still found their job satisfying**, but among those who took part at both waves the proportion who were satisfied had decreased (compared with Wave 1). While satisfaction with pay and job security improved, it fell for the sense of achievement gained from doing the job and the nature of the work itself, particularly among front line practitioners.

**Self-reported stress levels have increased, since Wave 1**. There has been an increase in the proportion of local authority child and family social workers feeling:

- stressed by their job
- that they are asked to fulfil too many roles in their job, and;
- that their overall workload is too high.

The key driver analysis found that these well-being related factors have one of the largest impacts on job satisfaction.

**Despite this, the majority plan to continue working in the profession**. Of all those currently working in local authority child and family social work, including agency workers, almost three-quarters anticipated remaining in the profession and being directly employed by a local authority in 12 months' time. Just one in twenty expected to be working outside of social work altogether.

**Among those considering leaving child and family social work in the next 12 months, the most common reasons were personal or retirement-related, rather**

**than job-related factors.** Dislike of the culture of local authority child and family social work and factors related to high working hours and aspects of workload such as paperwork and caseload were the most common job-specific reasons. Of those who had left, a relatively high proportion were considering returning within the next five years.

The qualitative follow-up interviews revealed further insights and emphasised the **variability and highly personal nature of people's decisions.** However, there was definitely a sense that workload, stress and 'burnout' were deep-seated and recurrent issues among those who had decided to leave. These could be exacerbated by organisational factors such as unsupportive line managers, oppressive working cultures, inadequate IT, and overly bureaucratic systems. On the other hand, they could be alleviated by protective factors which helped to reinforce personal resilience, including: good quality reflective supervision; sufficient time and support for professional development; positive and supportive relationships with colleagues and line managers; access to flexible working arrangements and supportive IT; and senior managers who were visible, approachable and seen to take a genuine interest in their staff. The qualitative interviews identified that it was important to have a positive working culture and practical arrangements in place which helped social workers to feel they were in control of their workload, rather than being controlled by it. In future waves the study will explore the importance of such organisational factors in greater depth.

# Appendix 1: Methodology

## Overview of methodology

The study comprises two core components:

- A longitudinal mixed-methods online and telephone survey of child and family social workers, to be conducted across five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23. The second wave of the survey, conducted between September 2019 and January 2020 comprised two surveys:
  - Wave 2 longitudinal survey. All respondents who completed the Wave 1 survey and consented to be recontacted for the next wave were invited to complete this survey, where contact details were held.
  - ASYE survey: the survey for this sample consisted of social workers on their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), who started in their role between October 2018 and June 2019.
- At the end of the Wave 2 survey period, 40 follow-up telephone interviews with a mixture of 'stayers' and 'leavers' were conducted – defined as those who indicated at Wave 1 that they planned to stay in local authority child and family social work over the next 12 months, and those who indicated they were planning to leave local authority child and family social work within the same time frame.

## Local Authority recruitment and profile

### Original longitudinal sample

In order to build a sample of local authority child and family social workers, in summer 2018, prior to the first wave of the survey, IFF wrote to Directors of Children's Services (DCS) in all 152 local authorities/ Children's Trusts to invite them to take part in the research. Ninety-five local authorities/ Children's Trusts in England agreed to participate in the study. This accounted for approximately two-thirds of all local authorities/ Trusts in England, providing a good spread by region and Ofsted rating (see Tables A.1-A.3 overleaf for a detailed breakdown).

Sixty-four areas agreed to take part by providing a census of their in-scope staff work email addresses, and in some cases work telephone numbers (via a secure transfer site) and a further 31 agreed to sending out a link to the online survey to their in-scope staff on IFF's behalf.

Respondents to the Wave 2 survey comprised social workers who were recruited through this method, who completed the Wave 1 survey and consented to being recontacted to take part in the Wave 2 survey.

**Tables A.1-A.3: The profile of participating Local Authorities in England (Main survey)**

Number invited	152
Number agreed	95
<i>LA sending invitations</i>	31
<i>IFF sending invitations</i>	64
% of LAs agreed to participate	63%
Declined to take part	40

Region	Total LAs in England	Agreed to participate	% of LAs in each region that agreed to participate
North East	12	9	75%
North West	23	13	57%
Yorkshire and the Humber	15	7	47%
East Midlands	9	7	78%
West Midlands	14	9	64%
East of England	11	8	73%
South East	19	11	58%
South West	16	9	56%
Greater London	33	22	70%
<b>TOTAL (ENGLAND)</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>63%</b>

Ofsted Rating <sup>22</sup>	Total LAs in England	Agreed to participate	% of LAs in each category that agreed to participate
1 (Outstanding)	3	1	33%
2 (Good)	54	39	72%
3 (Requires improvement)	72	45	64%
4 (Inadequate)	23	10	43%
<b>TOTAL (ALL CATEGORIES)</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>63%</b>

<sup>22</sup> Local authority children's services departments are regularly inspected by Ofsted and therefore their ratings are subject to change. The distribution in this table is based on Single Inspection Framework (SIF) Ofsted ratings as of June 2018, when local authorities were first approached about taking part in the research. The information is published by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS):

<https://adcs.org.uk/inspection/article/sif-outcomes-summary>



## ASYE supplementary sample

To ensure that the study continues to represent new entrants to the sector, a supplementary sample of ASYE social workers was collected in Wave 2 – each subsequent wave of the research will repeat this exercise.

This exercise was similar to the approach taken to building the original survey sample in summer 2018. The approach differed in that local authorities that took part in Wave 1 were contacted by Skills for Care, who were able to utilise their links with local authority ASYE leads. IFF wrote to the DCS at local authorities that did not take part in Wave 1 to invite them to take part in the ASYE strand. Local authorities sent all ASYE contact details directly to the research team at IFF.

Local authorities were asked to provide contact details for ASYE staff who had started in their role between October 2018 and June 2019. This timeframe was chosen to minimise overlap between ASYE staff who took part in the Wave 1 survey and the ASYE survey in Wave 2 – sample for the Wave 1 survey was collected by the end of September 2018 – and to ensure that a 12 month timeframe could be used for subsequent waves of research – from Wave 3 onwards the ASYE time frame will be June-May.

Eighty-eight (88) local authorities / Children's Trusts agreed to participate in the ASYE strand of the research (see Tables A.4-A.6 for a detailed breakdown). Of these, 47 provided contact details of their in-scope ASYE staff and 41 agreed to circulate the open link survey on IFF's behalf. The achieved sample consisted of ASYE social workers from 72 local authorities, indicating that in 16 local authorities there were no responses. This may have been because no ASYE social workers engaged with the survey (especially where there were only a small number of in-scope potential respondents) or it may have been because the local authority did not disseminate the open link.

**Tables A.4-A.6: The profile of participating Local Authorities in England (ASYE survey)**

Number invited	152
Number agreed	88
<i>LA sending invitations</i>	47
<i>IFF sending invitations</i>	41
% agreed to participate	58%
Declined to take part	64

Region	Total LAs in England	Agreed to participate	% of LAs in each region that agreed to participate
North East	12	9	75%
North West	23	12	52%
Yorkshire and the Humber	15	8	53%
East Midlands	9	7	78%
West Midlands	14	8	57%
East of England	11	7	64%
South East	19	10	53%
South West	16	6	38%
Greater London	33	21	64%
<b>TOTAL (ENGLAND)</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>58%</b>

Ofsted Rating	Total LAs in England	Agreed to participate	% of LAs in each category that agreed to participate
1 (Outstanding)	3	2	66%
2 (Good)	54	36	67%
3 (Requires improvement)	72	38	53%
4 (Inadequate)	23	12	52%
<b>TOTAL (ALL CATEGORIES)</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>58%</b>

## Social worker invitations

Where sample was provided direct to IFF it was possible to send an individualised survey link, targeted reminders, and (where a work phone number was provided) to conduct a final top-up survey using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Where the survey was conducted using an open link, the relevant local authorities were asked to send out reminders to staff, but these could not be targeted at non-responders and therefore were less frequent.

## Soft launch

A soft launch of each survey was conducted 18 – 20 September 2019, with 10% of the total samples (463 for the W2 survey and 62 for the ASYE survey). Data collected through this exercise were subjected to a series of quality control checks, to ensure the survey was working and interpreted as intended. Respondents were also given the opportunity to email queries to a dedicated survey inbox, although no queries were received during this period. Quality checks of soft launch data confirmed that no revisions were necessary ahead of the full survey launch.

A pilot was not considered necessary for either the Wave 2 or the ASYE surveys as both were largely based on the Wave 1 questionnaire, which had been piloted twice prior to its launch.

## Mainstage

The mainstage online survey launched on 24 September 2019 and concluded on 10 November, with a final reminder mailing concluding fieldwork on 12 January 2020. The mainstage follow-up telephone surveys with people who had not responded to the online survey launched on 11 November 2019 and concluded on 7 January 2020.

A total of 5 online reminders were sent via the direct link for each survey. Alongside this, participating local authorities circulating the ASYE open survey link were asked to send survey reminders to their in-scope staff a total of 4 times. Suggested reminder email text was shared with open link local authorities as part of these communications.

## Response and response rates

A breakdown of overall response rates and response rates by mode is shown in Tables A.7-A.8 overleaf. As Table A.7 shows, the Wave 2 survey response rate was 72% of those who had agreed to be recontacted at Wave 1, achieving a good spread of response by local authority Ofsted rating and region.

It is difficult to calculate an overall response rate for the ASYE strand as the survey was only distributed directly to relevant social workers in around half of local authorities who took part. The remaining local authorities distributed the survey themselves; as not all local authorities provided population figures for their ASYE social workers, we are unable to calculate a response rate for ASYE workers who completed through the open link. Therefore, only the response rate from sampled ASYE contacts can be calculated: this was 25% overall.

**Table A.7: Response by local authority region and Ofsted rating – Wave 2 survey**

		Online <i>[valid emails provided]</i> n	Online <i>[valid emails provided]</i> %	Telephone <i>[approached via telephone]</i> n	Telephone <i>[approached via telephone]</i> %	Total response <i>[Online and telephone]</i> n	Total response <i>[Online and telephone]</i> %
<b>Overall</b>		<b>1,701</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>1,601</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>3,302</b>	<b>72%</b>
Region	North East	130	35%	131	53%	261	70%
	North West	155	38%	119	47%	274	67%
	Yorkshire and the Humber	110	39%	86	61%	196	68%
	East Midlands	184	34%	219	61%	403	74%
	West Midlands	153	38%	120	54%	273	68%
	East of England	235	40%	197	59%	432	72%
	South East	304	40%	268	61%	572	75%
	South West	142	42%	122	61%	264	77%
	Greater London	288	33%	339	61%	627	71%
Ofsted	Outstanding	262	36%	268	62%	530	72%
	Good	714	36%	709	58%	1,423	71%
	Requires improvement	528	40%	419	54%	947	71%
	Inadequate	197	37%	205	65%	402	76%

**Table A.8: Response by local authority region and Ofsted rating – ASYE survey**

		Sampled responses: Online	Sampled responses Online	Sampled responses Telephone	Sampled responses Telephone	Total sampled response	Total sampled response	Open-link responses	Sampled & open link TOTAL
		<i>[valid emails provided] n</i>	<i>[valid emails provided] %</i>	<i>[approached via telephone] n</i>	<i>[approached via telephone] %</i>	<i>[Online and telephone] n</i>	<i>[as % of starting sample]</i>	Online	Total ASYE responses
		<b>113</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>261</b>
Region	North East	9	14%	5	10%	14	21%	7	<b>21</b>
	North West	13	25%	5	13%	18	34%	20	<b>38</b>
	Yorkshire and the Humber	11	22%	1	8%	12	24%	12	<b>24</b>
	East Midlands	10	13%	3	5%	13	17%	0	<b>13</b>
	West Midlands	13	14%	7	9%	20	21%	6	<b>26</b>
	East of England	15	16%	8	11%	23	24%	12	<b>35</b>
	South East	3	21%	0	0%	3	21%	17	<b>20</b>
	South West	13	33%	5	21%	18	45%	7	<b>25</b>
	Greater London	26	14%	20	17%	46	25%	13	<b>59</b>
Ofsted	Outstanding	10	23%	5	16%	15	35%	28	<b>43</b>
	Good	55	17%	26	13%	81	25%	29	<b>110</b>
	Requires improvement	40	14%	20	9%	60	22%	29	<b>89</b>
	Inadequate	8	35%	3	21%	11	48%	8	<b>19</b>

## Telephone sample outcomes

Tables A.9 and A.10 show the outcomes from the telephone survey. For the Wave 2 survey, the telephone response rate was 58% overall: as a proportion of completed usable contacts this equates to 69% adjusted response rate.

**Table A.9: Telephone survey outcomes – Wave 2 survey**

	n	As % of total starting sample	As % of usable sample
<b>Total starting sample</b>	<b>2,751</b>	-	
<b>All confirmed unusable sample</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>16%</b>	
Unobtainable	119	4%	-
No longer works at LA and no forwarding number given	155	6%	-
Requested to complete online	82	3%	-
Wrong / invalid number	20	1%	-
Not available during fieldwork	69	3%	-
<b>All confirmed usable sample</b>	<b>2,306</b>	<b>84%</b>	
Soft appointment	43	2%	2%
Other live sample (general call backs)	443	16%	19%
<b>Completed contacts</b>	<b>1,820</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>79%</b>
Refusals	93	3%	4%
Breakdown	34	1%	2%
<b>Completed</b>	<b>1,601</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>69%</b>
Subsequently completed online	92	3%	4%

For the ASYE survey, the telephone response rate was 11% overall, or 13% of completed usable contacts. This response rate was lower than the response rate for the Wave 2 survey for two reasons:

- For the ASYE respondents it was their first contact from IFF in regards to the survey, while the Wave 2 respondents were already invested in the research; they had already completed the Wave 1 survey and had agreed to be recontacted about the Wave 2 survey.
- The ASYE survey was longer than the Wave 2 survey as it contained the full set of 'baseline' and demographic questions (e.g. entry route, ethnicity) which were not repeated in Wave 2. Typically with any surveys, the response rate falls as the survey length increases.

**Table A.10: Telephone survey outcomes – ASYE survey**

	<b>n</b>	<b>As % of total starting sample</b>	<b>As % of usable sample</b>
<b>Total starting sample</b>	<b>471</b>		
<b>All confirmed unusable sample</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>14%</b>	
Unobtainable	32	7%	-
No longer works at LA and no forwarding number given	7	2%	-
Requested to complete online	19	4%	-
Wrong / invalid number	1	0%	-
Not eligible for research	6	1%	-
<b>All confirmed usable sample</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>86%</b>	
Soft appointment	29	6%	7%
Other live sample (general call backs)	309	66%	76%
<b>Completed contacts</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Refusals	7	2%	2%
Breakdown	7	2%	2%
<b>Completed</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>13%</b>

## Analysis

### Wave 2 weighting

The survey data was weighted to correct for minor differences in the achieved profile of the sample and the population according to the available DfE workforce statistics at the time the research began (before Wave 1), where possible.

After comparing the profile of the Wave 2 achieved sample against the 2018 population statistics it was decided to weight by whether or not the social worker was directly employed by their local authority or employed through an agency (as shown in Table A.11 below), and by region, the same approach taken in Wave 1.

While there was some variation in Ofsted rating between the achieved profile and the population figures, weighting was not applied by Ofsted rating as this is a fluid, often changing measure.



**Table A.11 Profile of achieved interviews at Wave 2 compared with 2018 DfE workforce statistics**

Demographic		Survey (n)	Survey (%)	2018 DfE statistics
Age band	Under 25 years	54	2%	n/a
	25 – 34 years	753	23%	n/a
	35 – 44 years	866	26%	n/a
	45 – 54 years	854	26%	n/a
	55 – 64 years	692	21%	n/a
	65 years +	59	2%	n/a
	Prefer not to say	24	1%	
Gender	Male	545	17%	14%
	Female	2736	83%	86%
	Other	2	0%	-
	Prefer not to say	19	1%	-
Agency worker <b>WEIGHTED</b>	Yes	161	5%	15%
Region of LA <b>WEIGHTED</b>	East Midlands	378	12%	8%
	North East	241	8%	6%
	South East	541	17%	15%
	East of England	427	14%	9%
	Greater London	581	19%	16%
	North West	262	8%	14%
	South West	239	8%	9%
	West Midlands	250	8%	11%
	Yorkshire and the Humber	192	6%	12%
Ofsted rating of LA <sup>23</sup>	Outstanding	501	16%	9%
	Good	1137	37%	37%
	Requires improvement	1078	35%	41%
	Inadequate	395	13%	13%
Ethnicity <sup>24</sup>	White	2606	79%	79%
	Mixed	109	3%	3%

<sup>23</sup> Local authority children's services departments are regularly inspected by Ofsted and therefore their ratings are subject to change. The distribution in this table is based on Single Inspection Framework (SIF) Ofsted ratings as of June 2018, when local authorities were first approached about taking part in the research. The information is published by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS): <https://adcs.org.uk/inspection/article/sif-outcomes-summary>

<sup>24</sup> The ethnicity profiles compared in this table have been re-based both for the survey and for the DfE workforce statistics, to exclude 'unknown/ information not provided'. This provides a more clear-cut comparison and shows that the known survey profile is very similar to the known profile in the DfE workforce statistics.

	Asian/Asian British	94	3%	5%
	Black/ Black British	265	8%	11%
	Other Ethnicity	94	3%	1%
	Unknown	133	4%	-
UNWEIGHTED BASE		3302	100%	

## ASYE weighting

ASYE data was weighted by Region, using the latest population statistics (2018-19), reflecting the time period that the survey was administered. Due to the nature of the sample being those employed by local authorities on their ASYE, there were no agency staff in the sample so weighing by this variable was not necessary.

## Statistical significance

In terms of statistical confidence in the findings, the confidence interval is 1.18. This means we can be 95% confident that the true figure lies within + or – 1.18 percentage points of the survey finding, based on the whole sample and a percentage of 50%.

## Qualitative follow-up research

Respondents were asked separate questions about willingness to be re-contacted for the qualitative follow-up interviews and willingness to be recontacted for the next wave of the survey research. There was a high level of agreement on both measures, particularly for the Wave 2 survey respondents, the target of the qualitative interviews. 84% of W2 survey respondents agreed to be re-contacted for the qualitative follow-up and 95% to be re-contacted for Wave 3 of the survey. 84% of ASYE respondents consented to be re-contacted for the next wave of the survey.

The qualitative interviews took place between January and March 2020, and were all conducted by telephone, lasting around 45 minutes on average. The topic guides were designed by researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Salford, and IFF Research, in consultation with the DfE.

The 40 interviews were split between 4 groups. Ten interviews were conducted each with respondents who said they would:

- Still be in Child and Family Social Work (CAFSW) in 12 months' time in Wave 1 and were still in CAFSW in Wave 2;
- Still be in CAFSW in 12 months' time in Wave 1 but had left the sector by Wave 2;

- Have left CAFSW in 12 months' time in Wave 1 and had left the CAFSW by Wave 2, and;
- Have left CAFSW in 12 months' time in Wave 1 but were still in sector by Wave 2.

Within each group, interviews were recruited to ensure a spread of characteristics, such as job role, number of years in social work, LA Ofsted rating, gender, age band etc.

Interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of respondents, and transcribed. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. The transcriptions formed the material for analysis. Respondents were each offered a £20 voucher incentive as a thank-you for their participation.

## Non-responders at Wave 2

Of the 5,621 respondents who completed the Wave 1 survey, 2,319 did not complete the Wave 2 survey, which equates to 41% of Wave 1 completes. Table A.12 shows the outcomes for these 2,319 non-responders.

**Table A.12: Breakdown of responders and Wave 2 non-responders**

	Respondents (n)	Respondents as % of Wave 1 achieved sample
<b>Wave 1 complete</b>	5,621	100%
<b>Wave 2 complete</b>	3,302	59%
<b>Wave 2 non-responder (took part in Wave 1, did not take part in Wave 2)</b>	2,319	41%
Did not consent to recontact at Wave 2	1,026	18%
Were sent but did not engage with the Wave 2 survey	369	7%
Started but did not complete the Wave 2 survey	831	15%
Refused to take part in the Wave 2 survey	93	2%

## Demographic and employment characteristics

Overall, demographic characteristics of Wave 2 non-responders were fairly similar to the Wave 2 and Wave 1 achieved samples. Non-responders were, however, less likely than Wave 2 responders to be White ethnic background (73% of non-responders compared to 79% in Wave 2). Non-responders were more likely to be Black (11% of non-responders compared to eight per cent at Wave 2) and to not have disclosed their ethnic background in Wave 1 (6% said prefer not to say compared to 4% at Wave 2).

Wave 2 non-responders were less likely than Wave 2 completers to be male (14% compared to 17%), although the proportion of females was consistent (83% for both).

Wave 2 non-responders were more likely not to provide a response (2% compared with 1%).

While there was a higher proportion of ASYE non-responders compared to the Wave 2 achieved sample, this reflects the small proportion of ASYEs at Wave 2 rather than these respondents being less likely to respond in Wave 2; the proportion of non-responders at Wave 2 is consistent with the proportion of ASYE respondents at Wave 1 (7% compared to 6%). Wave 2 non-responders were slightly more likely to be front line practitioners (56% compared with 53% of Wave 2 responders) and less likely to be senior service managers or directors (13% compared with 17%).

There was very little variation in employment situation between the achieved samples and the Wave 2 non-responders. Although a higher proportion of non-responders (98%) worked in local authority child and family social work compared with Wave 2 (94%), this again reflects the changing Wave 2 cohort rather than these types of respondent being more likely to drop out after Wave 1; the proportion of Wave 1 completers working in local authority child and family social work was consistent with Wave 2 non-responders (both 98%).

## Attitudes

As is seen with various findings throughout the report, those who completed the Wave 1 survey but did not respond to the Wave 2 survey were typically less positive about their experiences of various aspects of their working life compared with the overall Wave 2 and Wave 1 achieved samples. This can be seen in Table A.13 overleaf, for example:

- 70% of Wave 2 non-responders reported being satisfied overall with their social work careers to date, compared with 74% of the Wave 1 sample and 75% of the Wave 2 sample.
- 69% of Wave 2 non-responders reported feeling loyal to their organisation, compared with 72% of the Wave 1 sample and 76% of the Wave 2 sample.
- 50% of Wave 2 non-responders reported feeling valued by their organisation, compared with 54% of the Wave 1 sample and 59% of the Wave 2 sample.<sup>25</sup>

**Table A.13: W2 non-response, compared with Wave 1 and Wave 2 achieved sample**

<b>Demographic/ characteristic (unweighted)</b>		<b>W2 survey (n)</b>	<b>W2 survey (%)</b>	<b>W1 achieved (n)</b>	<b>W1 achieved (%)</b>	<b>W1 complete/ W2 non- complete (n) W1 results</b>	<b>W1 complete/ W2 non- complete (%) W1 results</b>
<b>Age</b>	Under 25 years	80	2%	145	3%	65	3%
	25 – 34 years	796	24%	1389	25%	591	25%
	35 – 44 years	863	26%	1465	26%	600	26%
	45 – 54 years	869	26%	1457	26%	587	25%
	55 – 64 years	631	19%	1043	19%	412	18%
	65 years +	43	1%	59	1%	16	1%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	20	1%	63	1%	48	2%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	545	17%	869	15%	324	14%
	Female	2731	83%	4672	83%	1936	83%
	Other	2	0%	6	0%	4	0%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	24	1%	74	1%	55	2%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	2606	79%	4300	81%	1694	73%
	Mixed	109	3%	177	3%	68	3%
	Asian	94	3%	185	3%	91	4%
	Black	265	8%	522	10%	257	11%
	Arab	1	0%	154	3%	2	0%
	Other	94	3%	-	-	57	2%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	133	4%	-	-	150	6%
<b>Region</b>	East Midlands	378	12%	638	11%	235	10%
	North East	241	8%	426	8%	165	7%
	South East	541	17%	909	16%	336	14%
	East of England	427	14%	781	14%	349	15%
	Greater London	581	19%	1066	19%	440	19%
	North West	262	8%	483	9%	209	9%

	South West	239	8%	425	8%	161	7%
	West Midlands	250	8%	479	9%	206	9%
	Yorkshire and the Humber	192	6%	414	7%	218	9%
<b>Ofsted</b>	Outstanding	501	16%	526	9%	282	12%
	Good	1137	37%	2708	48%	1084	47%
	Requires improvement	1078	35%	1908	34%	763	33%
	Inadequate	395	13%	479	9%	190	8%
<b>Agency worker Job role</b>	Yes	161	5%	315	6%	149	6%
	ASYE	47	2%	338	6%	149	7%
	Front line practitioner	1654	53%	2991	54%	1262	56%
	Practice supervisor	241	8%	433	8%	177	8%
	Practice leader	98	3%	213	4%	73	3%
	Team Manager	204	7%	319	6%	120	5%
	Senior service manager/director	513	17%	713	13%	299	13%
	Other	332	11%	478	9%	173	8%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	10	0%	23	0%	15	1%
<b>Length of time at employer</b>	Less than 6 months	121	4%	253	5%	103	5%
	6 months to 1 year	90	3%	360	7%	160	7%
	1 year	224	7%	656	12%	252	11%
	2 to 3 years	743	24%	1147	21%	473	21%
	4 to 5 years	468	15%	758	14%	337	15%
	6 to 10 years	489	16%	825	15%	327	14%
	More than 10 years	955	31%	1506	27%	614	27%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	9	0%	3	0%	2	0%
<b>Satisfied with career to date</b>	Agree	2408	75%	4081	74%	1598	70%
	Disagree	358	11%	598	11%	261	12%
	Neither agree nor disagree	457	14%	808	15%	401	18%

	Don't know / prefer not to say	7	0%	21	0%	8	0%
<b>Loyal to employer</b>	Agree	2358	76%	3962	72%	1560	69%
	Disagree	248	8%	418	8%	174	8%
	Neither agree nor disagree	478	15%	1107	20%	521	23%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	15	0%	21	0%	13	1%
<b>Valued by employer</b>	Agree	1820	59%	2987	54%	1142	50%
	Disagree	625	20%	1225	22%	538	24%
	Neither agree nor disagree	637	21%	1278	23%	582	26%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	17	1%	18	0%	6	0%
<b>Stressed</b>	Agree	1701	55%	2845	52%	1159	51%
	Disagree	742	24%	1315	24%	507	22%
	Neither agree nor disagree	640	21%	1333	24%	593	26%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	16	1%	15	0%	9	0%
<b>Workload is too high</b>	Agree	1649	53%	2757	50%	1146	51%
	Disagree	755	24%	1308	24%	496	22%
	Neither agree nor disagree	676	22%	1425	26%	612	27%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	19	1%	18	0%	14	1%
<b>Current situation</b>	Yes - still in local authority child and family social work	3099	94%	5508	98%	2268	98%
	No - but I'm still in child and family social work	48	1%	-	-	-	-
	No - but still in social work	59	2%	97	2%	41	2%
	No - employed, but have left social work altogether	24	1%	15	0%	10	0.4%
	No - unemployed and looking for work	10	0%	1	0%	-	-
	No - undertaking full-time further study.	3	0%	-	-	-	-
	No - on a career break	23	1%	-	-	-	-
	No - doing something else	35	1%	-	-	-	-

	Don't know / prefer not to say	1	0%	-	-	-	-
<b>Expected situation in 12 months' time</b>	Working in CAFSW for a local authority - directly	2443	74%	4249	77%	1635	72%
	Working in CAFSW for a local authority - via an agency	208	6%	367	7%	186	8%
	Working in CAFSW - in the private or voluntary sector	124	4%	161	3%	80	4%
	Working in social work, but outside of CAFSW	117	4%	149	3%	66	3%
	Working outside of social work altogether	152	5%	233	4%	115	5%
	Not working at all	111	3%	122	2%	68	3%
	Don't know / prefer not to say	147	4%	227	4%	118	5%



## Key Driver analysis

This section presents the results from analysis looking to understand what factors help to explain why (a) someone might be satisfied and someone else less satisfied working in social care and (b) what might be driving stress for front line child and family social workers. A 'key driver analysis' using linear regression was used to explore the relationship between satisfaction and a wide range of possible explanatory variables, such as length of time qualified and length of time at current employer. A separate model was run for drivers of stress.

### Drivers of satisfaction

A long list of variables covering measures directly related to child and family social work, such as Ofsted rating, reflective supervision and length of time as a social worker, were included alongside demographics (gender, age, ethnicity). The full list is included in Table A.14.

Factor analysis was used to group together responses to questions that both statistically and theoretically respondents answered in ways that are aligned indicating that these questions might represent an underlying concept. Three sets of questions were grouped in this way:

- Relationship with manager – this was based on the questions at E2
- Working environment, including L&D – this was based on the questions at E9
- Well-being - this was based on the questions at H1

These three summary measures were included instead of the sixteen individual items across those three grids of questions in the satisfaction model. The model on stress used the statement "I feel stressed by my job" from H1 as the outcome measure that the model sought to explain. Checking the individual correlation between this item and the other two statements at H1 ("My overall workload is too high" and "I feel I am being asked to do fulfil too many different roles in my job") showed there was enough differentiation between these measures by respondents to include these two questions as standalone items in place of the summary factor score.

The outcome measure the model sought to explain was agreement with the statement: 'Overall, I find my current job satisfying', measured on a strongly agree to strongly disagree scale. The scale was coded so that a high score denotes strong agreement that the job is satisfying, with a low score indicating low job satisfaction. The impact of each variable was converted into a percentage score which shows the relative importance of each measure for satisfaction with their current job. It must be stressed that these scores are relative and will change if the model is specified differently.

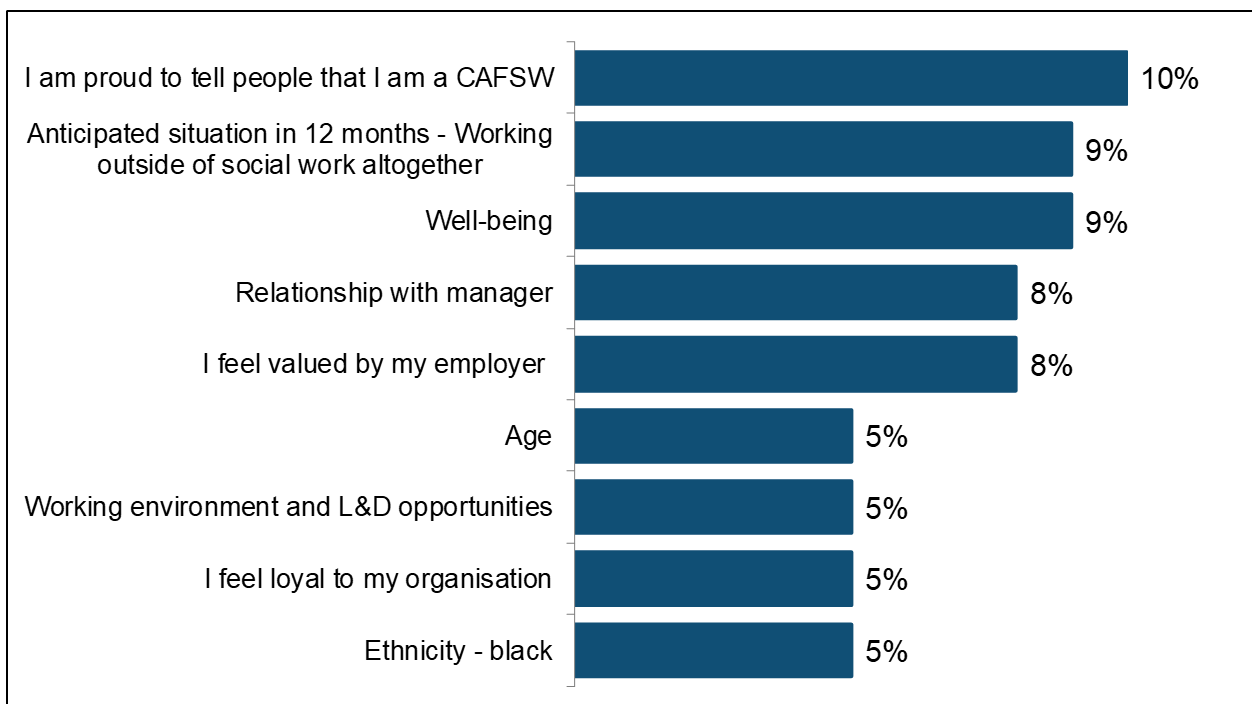
**Table A.14. Possible drivers of satisfaction with working in child and family social work**

Individual characteristics	Job related characteristics
Gender	Main focus of their work (B7)
Age	Length of time as a qualified social worker (B8)
Ethnicity	Length of time at current employer (B8)
Region	Anticipated situation in 12 months' time (F1)
Qualification(s)	Views of employer (E1)
Childcare responsibilities	Relationship with manager (E2)
Physical/ mental health conditions	Working environment, inc. learning and development opportunities (E9)
	Wellbeing – workload, roles, stress (H1)
	Causes of stress (H2)
	Reflective supervision (E4, E5)
	OFSTED rating

Figure A.1 shows the variables that have the greatest impact on satisfaction. Strongest is the statement “I am proud to tell people that I am a CAFSW”, perhaps not surprisingly it has a positive effect on satisfaction – the higher people rated on this statement the stronger their level of satisfaction; this accounted for 10% of the impact on satisfaction of all the variables included in the model. Next most important were “anticipated situation in 12 months – working outside social work” and the well-being factor; both of these had a negative effect in the model. ‘Anticipated situation’ was a categorical variable, for variables such as these each category need to be included separately but one category needs to be left out of the model and becomes the ‘reference category’; in this case the reference category was “working in CAFSW – directly in 12 months’ time”. This means that compared with those social workers who said that in 12 months’ time they still see themselves as working directly within CAFSW those who said they see themselves in working outside of social work altogether were less satisfied. The well-being factor was a summary of responses to the statements “my overall workload is too high”, “I feel I am

being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job” and “I feel stressed in my job”; these were coded with high scores denoting strong agreement with these statements. Consequently, those who scored high across these were more likely to score lower on satisfaction and resulted in the negative effect in the model. Relationship with manager and “I feel valued to my employer” were next most important; they both had a positive effect, a higher score on either measure resulted in a higher satisfaction score. The remaining variables shown each account for 5% of the variance in satisfaction scores. Older staff are more likely to have higher satisfaction scores. Staff who had higher scores on the working environment factor, i.e. those who were more likely to say that they had access to the right tools, resources and learning and development opportunities were more likely to be satisfied as were those who were more likely to agree that they are “loyal to their organisation”. For the ethnicity category, the summary ‘white’ group was left out of the model as the reference category. Black is significant and has a negative effect, which means compared to staff classified as white those classified as black were less likely to be satisfied.

**Figure A.1: Key drivers of satisfaction amongst front line child and family social workers**



The remaining significant variables had a smaller effect. Staff who saw themselves in 12 months’ time working in the private or voluntary social care sectors or working in social care but outside of CAFSW were less satisfied than staff who saw themselves as continuing to work in CAFSW directly. The next group of variables, all equally important, saw a mix of positive and negative effects on satisfaction. Staff who said that there is insufficient time to work directly with children and families had lower satisfaction scores than staff who did not cite this as a cause of stress, and the longer that staff have been

qualified as a social worker the lower the scores on satisfaction. In contrast, staff who reported receiving a good quality of reflective supervision were more likely to express satisfaction. Staff who said that the main focus of their work was health (3%) and adoption (2%) were more likely to have higher satisfaction scores. Where staff reported high turnover of staff satisfaction scores were lower. Women were more likely to have higher levels of satisfaction than men.

There is an R<sup>2</sup> measure which provides an indication as to how effective the model is in explaining satisfaction scores. The figure for this model is 36%. This means that while the model helps to explain some of the variance in satisfaction scores there remains a gap in understanding why some people are more satisfied currently with their job than others. An explanation as to why the model does not account for a larger variance is potentially that satisfaction is partly explained by factors not currently captured in the survey, such as complexity of workloads and personal resilience. For example, qualitative interviews across the two waves have highlighted occasions where social workers have high caseloads and feel stressed by their jobs but also report being satisfied, suggesting a strong personal resilience.

### Drivers of stress

The same analysis approach was taken to determine the key drivers of stress for front line child and family social workers. However, the initial model did not work well, leading to some results that were counterintuitive. Subsequently, the models were stripped back. A simplified model was created using only the 'causes of stress' statements (from question H2) and a handful of demographic variables (age, gender, disability and ethnicity). Age and disability were significant drivers of stress, but gender and ethnicity were not statistically significant in the model, meaning that these variables do not have an effect on stress.

This model was run both on all those in CAFSW and just front line social workers. While the results of the model make sense (see Figure A.2 for results from the model for front line social workers), the models are very weak, only explaining 3% of the variance (R<sup>2</sup>) relating to stress.

As the stress model is so weak, it was not appropriate to include it in the report of findings for Wave 2.

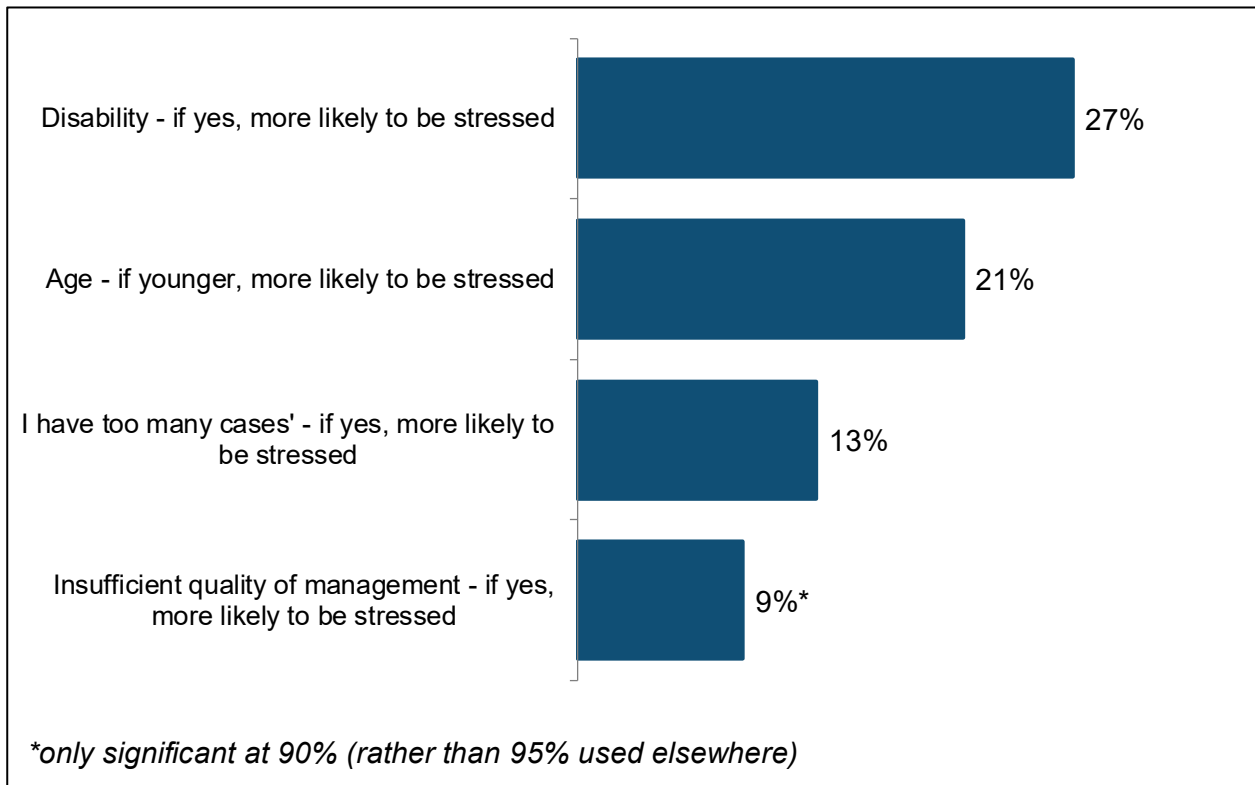
As with satisfaction, an explanation as to why the stress model is so weak is potentially that stress is being driven by factors not captured in the survey:

- Complexity of workloads: evidence from the qualitative interviews indicates that social workers can be very stressed by their workloads even if they do not work a huge number of cases, particularly if these involve court cases. While the number

of cases is currently collected, there is nothing collected on the complexity of cases.

- Personal resilience: we do not currently collect data on social workers' personal resilience to stress and their coping mechanisms meaning that we do not understand how stress affects different people and the extent to which it does so.

**Figure A.2: Key drivers of stress among front line child and family social workers**



## Appendix 2: Wave 2 survey questionnaire

### A Telephone screener

ASK PERSON WHO ANSWERS PHONE

S1 **Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is NAME and I'm calling from IFF Research. Please can I speak to [NAME]?**

Respondent answers phone	1	CONTINUE
Transferred to respondent	2	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft Appointment	4	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Engaged	5	CALL BACK
No reply / Answer phone		CALL BACK
Call back during Consumer hours	14	CALL BACK
Call back during B2B hours	15	CALL BACK
Refusal	6	CLOSE
Not available in deadline	7	CLOSE
Fax Line	8	CLOSE
Business Number	10	CLOSE
Dead line	11	CLOSE
Wrong telephone number	15	CLOSE
Person no longer works here	14	CLOSE
Request reassurances	12	GO TO REASSURANCES
Request reassurance email	13	COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS THEN CONTINUE OR MAKE APPOINTMENT  (SEE APPENDIX FOR EMAIL TEXT)

ASK CORRECT RESPONDENT (S1 = 1 OR 2)

S2 **Good morning / afternoon, my name is NAME, calling from IFF Research, an independent market research company, on behalf of the Department for Education (DFE).**

**You might remember that around 10-12 months ago you took part in a landmark new tracking study of social workers' career experiences, which IFF is conducting on behalf of the Department for Education. At that time, you agreed we could re-contact you to see how you're getting on and whether any of your circumstances or views have changed.**

**The interview is shorter this time and should last around 10 minutes. Would you have some time to go through the questions now?**

ADD IF NECESSARY:

**The research will improve understanding about what motivates people to enter child and family social work, why they stay or leave, and what impacts on their job satisfaction and career development. We are interested in your experiences, even if you are thinking of changing your job or of leaving the profession, or if you have already changed job or left.**

**All responses will be anonymous and analysed in aggregate form. No individual staff or local authorities will be identified in the reporting.**

**For further information you can email [SocialWorkerResearch@iffresearch.com](mailto:SocialWorkerResearch@iffresearch.com).**

**PROVIDE LINK TO THE PRIVACY NOTICE ON REQUEST:PRIVACY STATEMENT:  
[www.iffresearch.com/longitudinal-study-of-child-and-family-social-workers-privacystatements](http://www.iffresearch.com/longitudinal-study-of-child-and-family-social-workers-privacystatements)**

*INTERVIEWER NOTE: YOU MUST GET A CLEAR 'YES', OR SIMILAR RESPONSE, TO INDICATE CONSENT TO TAKING PART*

Continue	1	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	2	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Call back during Consumer hours	10	Call back
Call back during B2B hours	11	Call back
Refusal	4	GO TO S3
Refusal – company policy	5	GO TO S3
Refusal – taken part in recent survey	6	GO TO S3
Not available in deadline	7	THANK AND CLOSE
Request reassurances	8	GO TO REASSURANCES
Request reassurance email	9	COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS THEN CONTINUE OR MAKE APPOINTMENT

		(SEE APPENDIX FOR EMAIL TEXT)
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ASK IF NAMED RESPONDENT NOT ON SITE (S1=14)

**S2a Do you have an alternative number we could reach NAME on?**

Yes (please type in number)	1	THANK AND CLOSE (THIS BECOMES THE 'REFERRAL NUMBER')
No / Don't know	2	THANK AND CLOSE (GOES INTO UNUSABLE)

IF REFUSED (S2=4-6)

**S3 Would you be willing to take part online instead?**

Yes	1	CHECK EMAIL ADDRESS, CORRECT IF NEEDED, AND THANK AND CLOSE
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE

IF AGREED TO TAKE PART (S2 =1)

**S4 Before we begin, I just need to read out a quick statement based on GDPR legislation: Firstly, I want to reassure you that all of the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence, and that you have the right to the following:**

- 1) A copy of your data
- 2) Amending your data
- 3) Withdrawing from the research at any point

**To guarantee this, and as part of our quality control procedures, all interviews are recorded automatically.**

**Based on this information, are you willing to take part?**

Yes	1	
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

**Your details were given to us by [INSERT LA ON SAMPLE].**

**If respondent wishes to confirm validity of survey or get more information about aims and objectives, they can contact:**



## S Online landing page

Thank you for your interest in this landmark national study on the career experiences of child and family social workers. You took part in the first survey around 10-12 months ago and at that time you agreed we could re-contact you to see how you're getting on and whether any of your circumstances or views have changed.

Your contribution will be invaluable to the research, even if you are thinking of changing job or of leaving the profession, or if you have already changed job or left. The research is being conducted by IFF Research, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). Capturing the views of as many people as possible who took part in the first survey is crucial to ensure that the research remains representative.

For further information about the study, or to find out what happens to the survey data and how it is stored, please [click here](#).

Taking part is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point. If at the end of the survey you'd like to request access to your data or have this deleted, please go to [www.iffresearch.com/gdpr/](http://www.iffresearch.com/gdpr/) for more information. All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence, in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

- If you are willing to take part, please click 'Next'.
- IF INDIVIDUALISED LINK: Please note, **you can stop and start as many times as you like** and pick up where you left off. To do this you just need to use the link provided in your email invitation.
- When completing the survey, please only use the 'Next' button on the page rather than the 'Back' and 'Forward' buttons in your browser.

## B Current Employment Situation

IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **Please note: throughout this survey, where we refer to 'local authority' we also include Children's Trusts delivering LA Children's Services.**

### B1b REMOVED AFTER W1

ASK ALL

**B1 Are you currently working in a Local authority/ Trust in child and family social work? By this we mean any role in child and family social work, including more senior roles which do not have a direct caseload.**

ADD IF NECESSARY: **If you are on extended leave – such as maternity leave, or sick leave – but still on the payroll of your employer, then please count this as employed.**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. IF NO, PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	CONTINUE TO B2
No – but I'm still in child and family social work	2	GO B2 & B3 & B4NW-B4C THEN F1C
No – I now work in adult social work	9	GO B2 & B3 & B4NW-B4C THEN F1C
No – I've moved to a different area of social work (outside child and family or adult social work)	10	GO B2 & B3 & B4NW-B4C THEN F1C
No – I am employed, but have left social work altogether	3	GO TO F1A
No – I am unemployed and looking for work	4	GO TO F1
No – I am undertaking full-time further study.  <i>Please note: if you were studying part-time alongside work, then please select from the relevant work option (either option 1, 2 or 3)</i>	5	GO TO B1C
No – I am on a career break (for example, travelling, caring responsibilities etc.)	6	GO TO F1
No – I am doing something else (for example retired, ill-health etc.)	7	GO TO F1
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8	GO TO F1

B1A removed

IF UNDERTAKING FULL-TIME FURTHER STUDY (B1=5)

**B1c Is the further study that you are undertaking related to social work?**

Yes – it is related to child and family social work	<b>1</b>	GO TO i5
Yes – it is related to another area of social work	<b>2</b>	GO TO i5
No	<b>3</b>	Go to B1D
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	<b>4</b>	GO TO i5

IF UNDERTAKING FULL-TIME FURTHER STUDY NOT RELATED TO SOCIAL WORK (B1C=3)

**B1d What subject area are you studying?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. IF NO, PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*

Medicine & dentistry	1	GO TO i5
Subjects allied to medicine	2	GO TO i5
Biological sciences	3	GO TO i5
Agriculture & related subjects	4	GO TO i5
Physical sciences	5	GO TO i5
Mathematical sciences	6	GO TO i5
Computer science	7	GO TO i5
Engineering & technology	8	GO TO i5
Architecture, building & planning	9	GO TO i5
Social studies	10	GO TO i5
Law	11	GO TO i5
Business & administrative studies	12	GO TO i5
Mass communications & documentation	13	GO TO i5
Languages	14	GO TO i5
Historical & philosophical studies	15	GO TO i5
Creative arts & design	16	GO TO i5

Education	17	GO TO i5
Other (please specify)	18	GO TO i5
Don't know / prefer not to say	19	GO TO i5

ASK ALL STILL IN SW (B1=1 OR B1=2 OR B1=9 OR B1=10)

**B2 Which ONE of the following best applies to you?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT, CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES. SINGLE CODE.*

I am employed by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE] and I am based in the local authority / Children's Trust	1	
I work in social work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE] but I am technically employed by an agency	2	
I am employed by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE] but am on secondment to or based in another organisation e.g. CAMHS, NHS Trust, Social Work England or a Regional Adoption Agency	3	
I am working at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE] on an independent / self-employed basis	4	
I am employed by a local authority/ Children's Trust, but not/no longer by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK]	5	
I am employed by an agency but not/ no longer work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b (W1) IF OPEN LINK]	6	
I am independent / self-employed but not/ no longer work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	9	
Or are you employed on some other basis (please specify)	7	
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8	

IF PREVIOUSLY EMPLOYED BY LA DIRECT BUT NOW EMPLOYED BY AGENCY OR INDEPENDENT/ SELF-EMPLOYED (B2=6 OR 9)

**B3 Why are you now working [IF B2 = 6: for an agency] [IF B2 = 9: on an independent/ self-employed basis] instead of directly with a local authority?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

ASK IF MULTICODE AT B3

**B3a And which ONE of these is the main reason you're working [IF B2 = 6: for an agency] [IF B2 = 9: on an independent/ self-employed basis] instead of directly with a local authority?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM B3 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

*DS: Only show options selected at B3.*

The pay is better	1
I have more flexibility about when I work	2
Better work-life balance	3
More opportunities to gain experience of different roles	4
I am less accountable/ have less responsibility	5
I have more professional autonomy	6
Lack of available local jobs	7
Dissatisfaction with permanent employment	8
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know / prefer not to say	10

ASK IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT/ NO LONGER EMPLOYED BY LA ON SAMPLE OR BY ANOTHER LA DIRECTLY (B2=6, 7, 8 or 9 or B1=2)

**B4nw In your current role, do you work at a local authority/ Children's Trust?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No – but it is a public-sector organisation	2	ROUTE TO SECTION F
No – it is a private or voluntary sector organisation	3	ROUTE TO SECTION F
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	4	CONTINUE

ASK IF NOW WORK AT A DIFFERENT LOCAL AUTHORITY THAN LA ON SAMPLE (B2=5 OR B4NW=1)

**B4a What is the name of the local authority/ Children's Trust you now work at?**

To confirm, results will not be analysed by individual Local authority/ Trust.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE SELECT FROM THE DROP-DOWN LIST.

WRITE IN		
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	1	THANK AND CLOSE
Local authority is not in England	2	GO TO F1

IF STILL IN SOCIAL WORK BUT AT DIFFERENT LA TO LA ON SAMPLE [B2=5 OR B4NW=1]

**B4b Why are you now working at [IF LA given at B4a: 'INSERT LA FROM B4a' instead of; IF B4a=1: a different local authority/ Trust to] [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.

IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

ASK IF MULTICODE AT B4b

**B4c And which ONE of these is the main reason you are now working at [IF LA given at B4a: 'INSERT LA FROM B4a' instead of; IF B4a=1: a different local authority/ Trust to] [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]?**

IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM B4B IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

DS: Only show options selected at B4b.

The pay/benefits package is better	1
Better working hours	2
Better work-life balance	3
More opportunities to gain experience of different roles	4
Better progression opportunities	5
I have more professional autonomy	6
I relocated	7
Change in personal circumstances (other)	8
Better opportunities to develop skills	9
My workload was too high at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	10

I did not like the working culture at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	11
I found one or more colleagues difficult to work with at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	12
I was only on a temporary/fixed term contract at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	13
Promotion/ I am now in a more senior role	14
I did not like the physical working environment at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	15
I moved to a local authority / Children's Trust with a better Ofsted rating	16
I wanted to work closer to home / reduce my commute	17
I wanted to change role / try a different role	18
Poor IT systems and software at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	19
Other (please specify)	20
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say	21

ASK ALL: **The next few questions are about your current role.**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B5 Which ONE of the following best describes your current role?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)	1
Frontline practitioner	2
Practice supervisor	3
Practice leader	4
Senior service manager or Director not directly involved in practice	5
Team manager	8
Other (please specify)	6
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	7

**B6** THERE IS NO B6.

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B7 What is the main focus of your work? For example, Children in Need; Adoption; Early help.**

**If you work in a support or supervisory role, please select the areas in which those you support or supervise work.**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

Adoption	1
Fostering	2
Children with disabilities	3
Placements/ permanence	4
Leaving care	5
Youth offending	6
Duty/ first response / frontdoor / MASH	7
Health	8
Education	9
Assessment	10
Child in Need/ Child Protection	11
Looked after children	14
Prevention / early help services	15
Kinship care	16
Other (please specify)	12
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	13

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B8 And how long have you worked....?**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER IN EACH ROW*

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. CODE ONE PER ROW.*



	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 year	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say
At your current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
In your current role, with your current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B9 Thinking about your contractual arrangements, are you on a permanent contract or something different?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT AS NECESSARY IF NOT ON PERMANENT CONTRACT. SINGLE CODE.*

Permanent / open ended contract	1
Fixed term contract lasting 12 months or longer	2
Fixed term contract lasting less than 12 months	3
Temporary agency or casual contract	4
Consultancy contract	5
Secondment	
Some other contractual arrangement (please specify)	6
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW AND NOT A TEAM LEADER (B1=1 AND B5≠5 OR 8)

**B10 How many cases are allocated to you currently?**

**Please note, by 'case' we mean either:**

- An individual allocated to a social worker (for example a family of three siblings would be three individual cases); and/or
- A carer or carers allocated to a social worker for the purposes of fostering or adoption

**Please only count cases which are assigned directly to you personally rather than all cases held within your team or your department.**

WRITE IN	
Not applicable: non-case-holding role	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DK AT B10 (B10=2)

B10a **Please could you estimate the number of cases allocated to you currently, using the bands below?**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

1-5	1
6-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	4
21-25	5
26-29	6
30+	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B11 **How many hours are you contracted to work per week?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DK AT B11 (B11=2)

**B11a Please could estimate which of the following hourly bands you are contracted to work per week?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required).**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

1-15	
16-20	
21-30	
31-35	
36-40	
41-45	
46-50	
51+	
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B12 And how often would you say you work over and above your contracted hours to keep up with your workload?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Never	1
Occasionally	2
Most weeks	3

All the time	4
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contract	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	6

B13 THERE IS NO B13.

DS: B14 AND B15 TO BE DISPLAYED ON ONE PAGE.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **How many hours in a typical week do you spend doing the following...**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **if no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B14 1) **...Working? Please exclude any time spent travelling from your answer.**

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DK AT B14 (B14=2)

B14a **Please could you estimate the number of hours you spend working in a typical week?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE ADD IF NECESSARY: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

1-15	
16-20	
21-30	
31-35	
36-40	

41-45	
46-50	
51+	
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B15 2) Doing direct work with children and families/ carers?**

WRITE IN	
Not applicable - I do not do any direct work with children and families	3
Not applicable - e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DK AT B14 (B14=2)

**B15a Please could you estimate the number of hours in a typical week you spend doing direct work with children and families / carers?**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE ADD IF NECESSARY: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

0-2 hours	1
3-5 hours	2
6-10 hours	3
11-15 hours	4
16-20 hours	5
More than 20 hours	6
Not applicable	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

B16 THERE IS NO B16.

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B17 **During your time at your current employer have you made use of any of the following arrangements...?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Yes	No	Can't remember
Flexi-time	1	2	3
Job sharing (sharing a full-time job with someone)	1	2	3
Time off in lieu (TOIL)	1	2	3
Paid overtime	1	2	3

## C Entry Route to Social Work – removed after W1

## D Career History – removed after W1

## E Overall views of employer

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

E1 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about working in child and family social work at your current employer?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELEPHONE: DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
I feel loyal to my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel valued by my employer	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am proud to tell people that I am a child and family social worker	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

E2 **Now thinking about the managers at your current employer, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
My manager encourages me to develop my skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager motivates me to be more effective in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager is considerate of my life outside work	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager is open to my ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6
Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by my manager	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager recognises when I have done my job well	1	2	3	4	5	6
I receive regular feedback on my performance	1	2	3	4	5	6
The feedback I receive helps me to improve my performance	1	2	3	4	5	6



ASK IF B5=1/2/3/4/6

**E3 How frequently, if at all, have you received reflective supervision in the last 12 months?**

**Reflective supervision is a learning process that allows the practitioner to explore the factors influencing their practice, including emotions, assumptions and power relationships; develop an understanding of the knowledge base informing their practice and its limits; and, to identify next steps.**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*

At least once every two weeks	1	ASK E4
Once every three or four weeks	2	ASK E4
Once every five or six weeks	3	ASK E4
Less frequently than every six weeks	4	ASK E4
Have not received reflective supervision since joining current employer	5	ASK E4
Don't know / prefer not to say	6	ASK E6

ASK ALL ANSWERING E3 EXCEPT 'DON'T KNOW' (E3=1-5)

**E4 And in your view, is this...**

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

SHOW FOR ALL EXCEPT CODE 5 AT E3 'Have not received reflective supervision since joining current local authority: Too much	1
About right	2
Not enough	3
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	4

ASK ALL WHO HAVE RECEIVED SUPERVISION (E3=1-4)

**E5 How would you rate the quality of the reflective supervision you have received in the last 12 months?**

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Very good	1
Good	2
Poor	3
Very poor	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

**THERE IS NO E6**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW AND NOT ON ASYE (B1=1 AND B5≠1)

**E7 Are you currently responsible for directly supervising any of the qualified Child and Family Social Workers at your current employer?**

Yes (please specify how many):	1	ASK E8
No	2	ASK E9
Don't know / prefer not to say	3	ASK E9

ASK IF CURRENTLY A SUPERVISOR (E7=1)

**E8 How confident are you in your ability to provide reflective supervision?**

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Very confident	1
Fairly confident	2
Not very confident	3
Not at all confident	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**E9 And to what extent do you agree or disagree that...**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have the right tools (e.g. risk assessment tools, planning tools, etc.) to do my job effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6

I have the right resources (e.g. equipment, petty cash, etc.) to do my job effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6
The IT systems and software here support me to do my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
The physical environment in my offices is appropriate for the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**E10 Have you undertaken any learning and development/ CPD supported by your employer over the past 12 months?**

**By 'supported' we mean learning and development that has been provided, facilitated or funded by your employer.**

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know / prefer not to say	3	

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**E11 Have you been assessed through the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS)?**

Yes – I have taken the assessment	1	
No – I have been endorsed but have not yet taken the assessment	2	
No – I have not been endorsed or assessed through NAAS		
Don't know / prefer not to say	3	

## F Job outside CAFSW and short-term career plans

IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT IN SOCIAL WORK (B1=3)

**F1a What is your current job role? Please make sure that your area of work, as well as level, is clear in your answer (e.g. secondary school teaching assistant)**

WRITE IN	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	1

**F1b Removed**

IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT IN LA CAFSW (B1=2 OR 3 OR 9 OR 10)

**F1c How many hours are you contracted to work a week in your current role?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DK AT F1D (F1D=2)

**F1d Please could estimate which of the following hourly bands you are contracted to work per week?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required).**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

1-15	
16-20	
21-30	
31-35	

36-40	
41-45	
46-50	
51+	
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	

IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT IN LA CAFSW (B1=2 OR 3 OR 9 OR 10)

**F1e And how often would you say you work over and above your contracted hours in your current job?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Never	1
Occasionally	2
Most weeks	3
All the time	4
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contract	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	6

ASK ALL

**F1 In terms of your career plans, which ONE of the following comes closest to where you see yourself in 12 months' time?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

*DS: ROUTE B1=5-7 STRAIGHT TO i5 REGARDLESS OF F1 RESPONSE. ROUTE B1=8 STRAIGHT TO SECTION J.*

Working in child and family social work for a local authority – directly	1
Working in child and family social work for a local authority – via an agency	2
Working in child and family social work – in the private or voluntary sector	3
Working in social work, but outside of child and family social work	4

Working outside of social work altogether (please specify)	5
Not working at all (please specify)	6
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know/ prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**F3 Thinking more generally, how would you rate your career progression so far?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE*

Above my expectations	1
In line with my expectations	2
Below my expectations	3
Too early to say	4
I don't have any expectations about career progression	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	6

**Rest of Section F removed after Wave 1**

## G Job satisfaction

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT (B1=1-3, 9-10)

**G1 How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current job?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	IF TELE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
The sense of achievement you get from your work	1	2	3	4	5	6
The opportunity to develop your skills in your job	1	2	3	4	5	6
The amount of pay you receive	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your job security	1	2	3	4	5	6
The work itself	1	2	3	4	5	6
(ONLY IF STILL IN SW B1=1, 2, 9, 10) Public respect for the sort of work you do	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT (B1=1-3, 9-10)

**G2 And to what extent do you agree with the statement: “Overall, I find my current job satisfying”**

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE*

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	6

# H Workplace well-being

The next few questions are about wellbeing in the workplace. The research team will be analysing the data anonymously and so will not be following up individual responses.

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

H1 **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELE DISPLAY : "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
My overall workload is too high	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel stressed by my job	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF AGREE STRONGLY OR AGREE THAT FEEL STRESSED (H1\_3=1 or 2)

H2 **What do you feel is causing this stress?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT.*

ASK IF MULTICODE AT H2

H2a **And which of these do you feel is the ONE main thing that is causing this stress?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE:*

*PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM H2 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

*DS: Please only show options selected at H2.*

	H2	H2a
I have too much paperwork	1	1



I have too many cases	2	2
Insufficient quality of management/ support	3	3
Working culture/ practices	4	4
Having to make emotional or difficult decisions	5	5
Insufficient time for direct work with children and families	6	6
High staff turnover in my team/ area of practice	7	7
Lack of administrative/ business support	11	11
Lack of resources to support families	12	12
Other (please specify)	8	8
Nothing in particular, it is simply a stressful job	9	9
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	10	10

# I Reasons for leaving / coming back

IF ANSWERED F1=4-6: **You mentioned that in 12 months' time you think you'll be [INSERT F1 ANSWER].**

ASK ALL LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING CAFSW (B1=3/4/9/10 OR F1=4-6)

I1 **Why [B1=3/4/9/10 : did you leave] [F1=4-6: are you considering leaving] child and family social work?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE*

ASK ALL MULTICODE AT I1

I1a **And what is your ONE main reason for [B1=3/4/9/10 : leaving [F1=4-6: considering leaving] child and family social work?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I1 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

*DISPLAY ANSWERS FROM I1 (WITH DON'T KNOW)*

	I1	I2
It is just not the right type of job for me	1	1
It is not compatible with family or relationship commitments	2	2
I have found one or more of my colleagues difficult to work with	3	3
I did not/am not making the best use of the skills or experience I have	4	4
I don't like the culture of local authority social work	5	5
My fixed term contract ended/ends soon	6	6
IF F1=6: I will be retiring / retired	7	7
The amount of paperwork	8	8
The high caseload	9	9
The pay / benefits package	10	10
The working hours in general	11	11
Redundancy	12	12
I am taking a career break	14	14
I am temporarily working outside of child and family social work but expecting to return	15	15
Other (please specify)	13	13
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	X	X

ASK ALL STAYING IN SOCIAL WORK BUT LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING LA B2=5, 6,7,9

I2 **Why did you leave [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE*

ASK ALL MULTICODE AT I2

I2a **And what is your ONE main reason for leaving [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I2 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

DISPLAY ANSWERS FROM I2 (WITH DON'T KNOW)

	I2	I2a
I have found one or more of my colleagues difficult to work with	1	1
I feel I have learnt all that I can from working here	2	2
I would like to try working for a different local authority	3	3
I would like to try working for a different type of organisation altogether	4	4
I am not making the best use of the skills or experience here	5	5
I don't like the social work culture here	6	6
My fixed term contract ends soon	7	7
I am relocating	8	8
I am retired / retiring	9	9
The amount of paperwork I have to do	10	10
The high caseload	11	11
The pay / benefits package	12	12
The working hours in general	13	13
Other (please specify)	14	14
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say	X	X

- ASK IF MOVED/ CONSIDERING MOVING TO A NEW SECTOR ENTIRELY (B1=3 OR F1=5)
- I3 **To what extent [B1=3: do you][F1=5: do think you will] use your social work skills in the sector you [B1=3: now work in] [F1=5: the sector you think you'll move to next]?**
- IF ONLINE: *Please select one response*

IF TELEPHONE: *READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE*

To a great extent	1
To some extent	2
Not very much	3
Not at all	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

- ASK ALL LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING CAFSW (B1=3/4/9/10 OR F1=4-6)
- I4 **[IF LEFT B1=3/4/9/10 : And is there anything that might encourage you to return to child and family social work in future?] [IF CONSIDERING LEAVING (F1=4-6): And is there anything that might encourage you to remain in child and family social work?]**
- PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.*

- ASK IF MULTICODE AT I4
- I4a **And which ONE of these would you say would be the main thing that might encourage you to [B1=3/4/9/10 : return to] [F1=4-6: remain in] child and family social work in future?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I4 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

Flexi-time	1
Job-sharing	2
The ability to take time off in lieu (TOIL)	3
The ability to work from home	4
A more manageable workload in terms of caseload	5
A more manageable workload in terms of administration / paperwork	6
Higher pay	7
Other financial incentives such as overtime pay	8
Subsidised childcare	9
Better/ more promotion/ career progression opportunities	10
Better/ more training opportunities	11

Better physical working environment	12
Better working culture	13
Better IT systems and software	14
Other (please specify)	15
DS EXCLUSIVE CODE: No, nothing would encourage me to return to/ stay in social work	16
Don't know / prefer not to say	17

ASK ALL WHO HAVE LEFT CAFSW (B1=3-7, 9)

**I5 How likely would you say you are to return to child and family social work in the next five years?**

IF ONLINE: *PLEASE SELECT ONE RESPONSE*

IF TELEPHONE: *READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE*

Very likely	1
Fairly likely	2
Not very likely	3
Not at all likely	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

## J Demographics

IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL, IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL: **We'd like to end by asking you a few questions about yourself, to help us in our analysis.**

ASK ALL

J1 **What is your age?**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

Under 25 years	1
25 – 34 years	2
35 – 44 years	3
45 – 54 years	4
55 – 64 years	5
65 years and over	6
Prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL

J2 **Outside of work, do you have any care or childcare responsibilities?**

IF TELEPHONE: IF 'YES' PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES. MULTICODE OK

Yes: for school-aged child/children	1
Yes: for pre-school aged child/children	2
Yes: for child/ children with disabilities	3
Yes: caring for other family member or friends	4
No	5
Don't know / prefer not to say	6

ASK ALL

J4 **Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know / prefer not to say	3

# K Recontact

ASK ALL

- K1 **Would you be willing to take part in a follow-up survey in one year's time? This will involve doing a similar survey to find out what you are doing then and whether your circumstances or views have changed.**

**ADD AS NECESSARY: Following up will help us to build a picture of what influences social worker's career experiences and decisions over time. We would still like people to take part next year even if they have left or are thinking of leaving the profession.**

Yes ( <i>am willing to be re-contacted for the follow-up survey</i> )	1
No( <i>am not willing to be re-contacted for the follow-up survey</i> )	2

ASK ALL

- K2 **We will also be conducting some follow-up telephone interviews in the next couple of months which will cover these issues in more depth. The interviews will last around 45 minutes and you will be given £20 voucher as a thank you. Would you be willing to help us with this?**

Yes ( <i>can re-contact me for the qualitative research</i> )	1
No ( <i>cannot re-contact me for the qualitative research</i> )	2

- K3 **And would you be willing for us to contact you for quality control purposes, if we need to clarify any of the information you have given today?**

Yes	1
No	2

ASK IF AGREE TO RECONTACT AT K1 or K2 OR K3

- K4 **Thank you very much. Could we just take your name and home contact details? This will only be used to recontact you about this research, and is just in case your work details change.**

WRITE IN FIRST NAME AND SURNAME	
WRITE IN HOME EMAIL ADDRESS	
Refused	X
WRITE IN HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER (LANDLINE OR MOBILE)	

Refused	X
---------	---

**Thanks for taking part and supporting this research, we really appreciate your time.**



## Appendix 3: ASYE questionnaire

### A Telephone screener

ASK PERSON WHO ANSWERS PHONE

S1 **Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is NAME and I'm calling from IFF Research. Please can I speak to [NAME]?**

Respondent answers phone	1	CONTINUE
Transferred to respondent	2	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft Appointment	4	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Engaged	5	CALL BACK
No reply / Answer phone		CALL BACK
Call back during Consumer hours	14	CALL BACK
Call back during B2B hours	15	CALL BACK
Refusal	6	CLOSE
Not available in deadline	7	CLOSE
Fax Line	8	CLOSE
Business Number	10	CLOSE
Dead line	11	CLOSE
Wrong telephone number	15	CLOSE
Person no longer works here	14	CLOSE
Request reassurances	12	GO TO REASSURANCES
Request reassurance email	13	COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS THEN CONTINUE OR MAKE APPOINTMENT  (SEE APPENDIX FOR EMAIL TEXT)

ASK CORRECT RESPONDENT (S1 = 1 OR 2)

S2 **Good morning / afternoon, my name is NAME, calling from IFF Research, an independent market research company, on behalf of the Department for Education (DFE).**

**We have been commissioned by DFE to carry out a landmark new research study into the career experiences of child and family social workers.**

**The interview should last around 20 minutes. Would you have some time to go through the questions now?**

ADD IF NECESSARY:

**The research will improve understanding about what motivates people to enter child and family social work, why they stay or leave, and what impacts on their job satisfaction and career development. We are interested in your experiences, even if you are thinking of changing your job or of leaving the profession.**

**This is the second of five years that the survey will be running. We have invited child and family social workers who started their ASYE in October 2018 or later to take part this year in order to ensure we capture the views of the new entrants to the sector.**

**All responses will be anonymous and analysed in aggregate form. No individual staff or local authorities will be identified in the reporting.**

**For further information you can email [SocialWorkerResearch@iffresearch.com](mailto:SocialWorkerResearch@iffresearch.com).**

**PROVIDE LINK TO THE PRIVACY NOTICE ON REQUEST:PRIVACY STATEMENT:  
[www.iffresearch.com/longitudinal-study-of-child-and-family-social-workers-privacystatements](http://www.iffresearch.com/longitudinal-study-of-child-and-family-social-workers-privacystatements)**

*INTERVIEWER NOTE: YOU MUST GET A CLEAR 'YES', OR SIMILAR RESPONSE, TO INDICATE CONSENT TO TAKING PART*

Continue	1	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	2	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Call back during Consumer hours	10	Call back
Call back during B2B hours	11	Call back
Refusal	4	GO TO S3
Refusal – company policy	5	GO TO S3
Refusal – taken part in recent survey	6	GO TO S3
Not available in deadline	7	THANK AND CLOSE
Request reassurances	8	GO TO REASSURANCES

Request reassurance email	9	COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS THEN CONTINUE OR MAKE APPOINTMENT  (SEE APPENDIX FOR EMAIL TEXT)
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ASK IF NAMED RESPONDENT NOT ON SITE (S1=14)

**S2a Do you have an alternative number we could reach NAME on?**

Yes (please type in number)	1	THANK AND CLOSE (THIS BECOMES THE 'REFERRAL NUMBER')
No / Don't know	2	THANK AND CLOSE (GOES INTO UNUSABLE)

IF REFUSED (S2=4-6)

**S3 Would you be willing to take part online instead?**

Yes	3	CHECK EMAIL ADDRESS, CORRECT IF NEEDED, AND THANK AND CLOSE
No	4	THANK AND CLOSE

IF AGREED TO TAKE PART (S2 =1)

**S4 Before we begin, I just need to read out a quick statement based on GDPR legislation: Firstly, I want to reassure you that all of the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence, and that you have the right to the following:**

**4) A copy of your data**

**5) Amending your data**

**6) Withdrawing from the research at any point**

**To guarantee this, and as part of our quality control procedures, all interviews are recorded automatically.**

**Based on this information, are you willing to take part?**

Yes	1	
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

**Your details were given to us by [INSERT LA ON SAMPLE].**

**If respondent wishes to confirm validity of survey or get more information about aims and objectives, they can contact:**

## S Online landing page

Thank you for your interest in this landmark national study on the career experiences of child and family social workers. Your contribution will be invaluable to the research, even if you are thinking of changing job or of leaving the profession. The research is being conducted by IFF Research, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

This is the second of five years that the survey will be running. We have invited child and family social workers who started their ASYE in October 2018 or later to take part this year in order to ensure we capture the views of the new entrants to the sector.

For further information about the study, or to find out what happens to the survey data and how it is stored, please [click here](#).

Taking part is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point. If at the end of the survey you'd like to request access to your data or have this deleted, please go to [www.iffresearch.com/gdpr/](http://www.iffresearch.com/gdpr/) for more information. All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence, in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

- If you are willing to take part please click 'Next'.
- IF INDIVIDUALISED LINK: Please note, **you can stop and start as many times as you like** and pick up where you left off. To do this you just need to use the link provided in your email invitation.
- When completing the survey, please only use the 'Next' button on the page rather than the 'Back' and 'Forward' buttons in your browser.

ASK IF ACCESSING SURVEY VIA OPEN LINK

**Want to take a break or lost connection? Simply provide us with your email address below and we can send you a link to re-enter the survey at the last question you answered, so you won't have to start again from the beginning.**

WRITE IN		
Prefer not to say	1	

## B Current Employment Situation

IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **Please note: throughout this survey, where we refer to 'local authority' we also include Children's Trusts delivering LA Children's Services.**

ASK ALL OPEN LINK RESPONDENTS

- B1b **Before we begin, could I just confirm which local authority you are currently working for? This is just to make sure we're speaking to the right people. To confirm, results will not be analysed by individual local authority.**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE SELECT FROM THE DROP-DOWN LIST.*

DS: DROP DOWN LIST TO INCLUDE 'NONE OF THE ABOVE' CODE. IF 'NONE OF THE ABOVE' IS SELECTED, PLEASE THANK AND CLOSE.		
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	1	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL

- B1 **Are you currently working in child and family social work? By this we mean any role in child and family social work, including more senior roles which do not have a direct caseload.**

ADD IF NECESSARY: **If you are on extended leave – such as maternity leave, or sick leave – but still on the payroll of your employer, then please count this as employed.**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. IF NO, PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No – but I'm still in social work	2	GO B2 & B3 & B4 THEN ASK SECTION C
No – I am employed, but have left social work altogether	3	GO TO SECTION C
No – I am unemployed and looking for work	4	GO TO SECTION C
No – I am undertaking full-time further study.  <i>Please note: if you were studying part-time alongside work, then please select from the relevant work option (either option 1, 2 or 3)</i>	5	THANK AND CLOSE
No – I am on a career break (for example, travelling, caring responsibilities etc.)	6	
No – I am doing something else (for example retired, ill-health etc.)	7	
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8	

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B5 Are you currently on your Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	3	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B1A And are you registered as a social worker with the Health and Care Professions Council or Social Work England?**

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE
Don't know / prefer not to say	3	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR B1=2

**B2 Which ONE of the following best applies to you?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT, CODE FIRST THAT APPLIES. SINGLE CODE.*

I am employed by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK] and I am based in the local authority / Children's Trust	1	
I work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK] but I am technically employed by an agency	2	
I am employed by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK] but am on secondment to or based in another organisation e.g. CAMHS, NHS Trust, Social Work England or a Regional Adoption Agency	3	
I am working at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK] on an independent / self-employed basis	4	
I am employed by an organisation/company, but not/no longer by [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b IF OPEN LINK]	5	
I am employed by an agency but not/ no longer work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE IF CLOSED LINK AND FROM B1b (W1) IF OPEN LINK]	6	
I am independent / self-employed but no longer work at [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]	9	
Or are you employed on some other basis (please specify)	7	

IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8	
---	---	--

IF EMPLOYED BY AGENCY OR INDEPENDENT/ SELF-EMPLOYED (B2=2/4/6/9)

B3 **Why are you working [IF B2 = 2 OR 6: for an agency] [IF B2 = 4 OR 9: on an independent/ self-employed basis] instead of directly with a local authority?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

ASK IF MULTICODE AT B3

B3a **And which ONE of these is the main reason you're working [IF B2 = 2 OR 6: for an agency] [IF B2 = 4 OR 9: on an independent/ self-employed basis] instead of directly with a local authority?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM B3 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

*DS: Only show options selected at B3.*

The pay is better	1
I have more flexibility about when I work	2
Better work-life balance	3
More opportunities to gain experience of different roles	4
I am less accountable/ have less responsibility	5
I have more professional autonomy	6
Lack of available local jobs	7
Dissatisfaction with permanent employment	8
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know / prefer not to say	10



ASK IF EMPLOYED BUT NOT/ NO LONGER EMPLOYED BY LA ON SAMPLE (B2=5, 6, 7, 8 or 9)

**B4 Is the organisation you work for a local authority?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No – but it is a public-sector organisation	2	CONTINUE
No – it is a private or voluntary sector organisation	3	CONTINUE
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	4	CONTINUE

**ASK ALL: The next few questions are about your current role.**

**B6 THERE IS NO B6.**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B7a Do you mainly work with children only, with families/ carers only, or with both?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Children only	1
Families/carers only	2
Both	3
Other (please specify)	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B7 What is the main focus of your work? For example, Children in Need; Adoption; Early help.**

**If you work in a support or supervisory role, please select the areas in which those you support or supervise work.**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY.*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

Adoption	1
Fostering	2
Children with disabilities	3
Placements/ permanence	4
Leaving care	5
Youth offending	6
Duty/ first response / front door / MASH	7
Health	8
Education	9
Assessment	10
Child in Need/ Child Protection	11
Looked after children	14
Prevention / early help services	15
Kinship care	16
Other (please specify)	12
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	13

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B8 And how long have you worked....?**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER IN EACH ROW*

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 year	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say
As a qualified Social Worker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
At your current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
In your current role, with your current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B9 Thinking about your contractual arrangements, are you on a permanent contract or something different?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT AS NECESSARY IF NOT ON PERMANENT CONTRACT. SINGLE CODE.*

Permanent / open ended contract	1
Fixed term contract lasting 12 months or longer	2
Fixed term contract lasting less than 12 months	3
Temporary agency or casual contract	4
Consultancy contract	5
Secondment	6
Some other contractual arrangement (please specify)	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B10 How many cases are allocated to you currently?**

**Please note, by 'case' we mean either:**

- An individual allocated to a social worker (for example a family of three siblings would be three individual cases); and/or
- A carer or carers allocated to a social worker for the purposes of fostering or adoption

WRITE IN	
Not applicable: non-case-holding role	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DK AT B10 (B10=2)

**B10a Please could you estimate the number of cases allocated to you currently, using the bands below?**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

1-5	1
6-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	4
21-25	5
26-29	6
30+	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B11 **How many hours are you contracted to work per week?**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DK AT B11 (B11=2)

B11a **Please could estimate which of the following hourly bands you are contracted to work per week?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required).**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

1-15	
16-20	
21-30	
31-35	
36-40	
41-45	
46-50	
51+	
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B12 And how often would you say you work over and above your contracted hours to keep up with your workload?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Never	1
Occasionally	2
Most weeks	3
All the time	4
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contract	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	6

**B13 THERE IS NO B13.**

DS: B14 AND B15 TO BE DISPLAYED ON ONE PAGE.

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **How many hours in a typical week do you spend doing the following...**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **if no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**B14 1) ...Working? Please exclude any time spent travelling from your answer.**

DS: ALLOW RANGE OF 0-168 HOURS

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
Don't know / prefer not to say	2

IF DK AT B14 (B14=2)

B14a **Please could you estimate the number of hours you spend working in a typical week?**

READ OUT: **Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE ADD IF NECESSARY: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

1-15	
16-20	
21-30	
31-35	
36-40	
41-45	
46-50	
51+	
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	

ASK ALL WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND/OR FAMILIES (IF (B7A = 1, 2 OR 3)

**B15 2) Doing direct work with children and families/ carers?**

WRITE IN	
Not applicable e.g. self-employed, zero-hours contracts	1
Don't know / prefer not to say	2

**IF DK AT B14 (B14=2)**

B15a **Please could you estimate the number of hours in a typical week you spend doing direct work with children and families / carers?**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE ADD IF NECESSARY: **If no week is 'typical' then please think about the last full week that you worked.**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

0-2 hours	1
3-5 hours	2
6-10 hours	3
11-15 hours	4
16-20 hours	5
More than 20 hours	6
Not applicable	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

B16 THERE IS NO B16.

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

B17 **During your time at your current employer have you made use of any of the following arrangements...?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't remember</b>
Flexi-time	1	2	3
Job sharing (sharing a full-time job with someone)	1	2	3
Time off in lieu (TOIL)	1	2	3
Paid overtime	1	2	3



## C Entry Route to Social Work

IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL: **We'd now like to understand a bit more about how you got into social work.**

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

**C1 So just to start, why did you decide you wanted to embark upon a career in social work?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.*

ASK IF MULTICODE AT C1

**C1a And which ONE of these is the main reason?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*

*DS: only show options selected at C1.*

	C1	C1a
I wanted to help people / make a difference	1	1
I wanted to work with children and families	2	2
I wanted a stable job	3	3
I saw it as a springboard to another career	4	4
I was working in a related area (e.g. a youth worker or family support worker)	5	5
It aligns with my political or ideological beliefs	6	6
I had a <u>positive</u> personal experience of social work	7	7
I had a <u>negative</u> personal experience of social work	8	8
Funding/ bursary was available for the course	9	9
I have a long-term commitment to social work as a career	10	10
I wanted a decent salary	11	11
Other (please specify)	12	12
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": know / prefer not to say	13	13

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

**C2 What entry route did you take into social work ...?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE*

An undergraduate degree in social work (e.g. BSc or BA)	1
A postgraduate degree in social work (e.g. PGDip/MSc/MA)	2
The 'Step Up to Social Work' programme	3
The 'Frontline' programme	4
Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW)	5
Diploma in Social Work (DipSW)	6
Other (please specify)	7
Don't know / can't remember	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

**C3 What is the name of the institution or organisation at which you were registered for your first completed social work qualification? By this we meant the qualification which allowed you to register as a qualified social worker.**

*TIP: Please type the name of the institution below and select from the list. If it does not appear, please type it out in full.*

DS: DROP DOWN LIST TO INCLUDE CODES AT THE END FOR 'OVERSEAS INSTITUTION'		
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / prefer not to say	1	

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

**C4 What classification or grade did you achieve for your first completed social work qualification?**

*PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE*

First class	1	
2:1	2	
2:2	3	
3 <sup>rd</sup> class	4	
Unclassified	5	
Distinction	6	
Merit	7	
Pass	8	
Other (specify)	9	
Don't know/ prefer not to say	10	

ASK IF DID NOT DO AN UNDERGRADUATE QUALIFICATION IN SOCIAL WORK (IF CODES 2-7 AT C2 **AND NOT** CODE 1 AT C2)

**C4A What if any undergraduate subject area were you studying before you trained in social work?**

*TIP: Please type your course below and select from the list. If it does not appear, or you studied multiple subjects, please type it out in full.*

DS: ADD JACS CODES AS FOR DHLE	
DO NOT READ OUT: DON'T KNOW / PREFER NOT TO SAY	1
I DO NOT HAVE AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE	2

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

C5 **And was your first job in social work in the area of child and family social work?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

C6 THERE IS NO C6.

C7 MOVED TO D3 AND D4.

ASK ALL (B1 =2,3,4) UNLESS C2 = 8

C8 **And thinking about your career in social work to date, how well do you think your entry route into social work prepared you for...?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Very well	Quite well	Not very well	Not at all well	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know / prefer not to say
Working in social work	1	2	3	4	5
Working in child and family social work	1	2	3	4	5

## D Career History

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

D1 **Thinking about your professional career to date, since qualifying as a social worker, which of the following apply?**

**Please consider all of the organisations you have worked for i.e. regardless of whether they are local authorities, charities or private agencies.**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.*

*IF TELEPHONE READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH ROW.*

	Yes	No	(IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say
I have worked in other areas of social work besides child and family	1	2	3
Since qualifying I have worked outside of social work altogether	1	2	3

IF HAVE WORKED IN OTHER AREAS OF SOCIAL WORK (D1\_1=1)

D2 **What other areas of social work have you worked in?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY*

*PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.*

Adult Social Care	1
Learning and physical disabilities	2
Young offenders	3
Mental Health	4
Drugs, alcohol and addiction	5
Homelessness	6
Domestic violence / abuse	9
Probation services	10
Early help services	11
Other (please specify)	7
(IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say	8

D3 **How long have you....**

IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.

	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 year	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say
ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4) Worked in child and family social work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
IF HAVE WORKED IN OTHER AREAS OF SOCIAL WORK (D1_1=1) spent working in other areas of social work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
IF HAVE WORKED OUTSIDE OF SOCIAL WORK ALTOGETHER (D1_2=1) spent working outside of social work altogether	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1) OR RECENTLY LEFT BUT STILL ACTIVE IN LABOUR MARKET (B1 =2,3,4)

- D9 **Thinking about your career in child and family social work specifically, have you ever had a career break lasting one month or more? Please include any periods of paid or unpaid extended leave, such as maternity leave.**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: IF "YES" - PROMPT FROM LIST IF NECESSARY (MULTICODE OK)*

Yes: Maternity leave	1
Yes: Sick leave	2
Yes: Time out in order to travel	3
Yes: Caring responsibilities, for family or friends	4
Yes: Time out to study	5
Yes - OTHER: (Please specify)	6
No	7
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	8

## E Overall views of employer

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

E1 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about working in child and family social work at your current employer?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELEPHONE: DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
I feel loyal to my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel valued by my employer	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am proud to tell people that I am a child and family social worker	1	2	3	4	5	6



ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

E2 **Now thinking about the managers at your current employer, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
My manager encourages me to develop my skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager motivates me to be more effective in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager is considerate of my life outside work	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager is open to my ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6
Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by my manager	1	2	3	4	5	6
My manager recognises when I have done my job well	1	2	3	4	5	6
I receive regular feedback on my performance	1	2	3	4	5	6
The feedback I receive helps me to improve my performance	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK IF B1=1

E3 **How frequently, if at all, have you received reflective supervision since you joined your current employer?**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

*IF TELEPHONE: PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*

At least once every two weeks	1	ASK E4
Once every three or four weeks	2	ASK E4
Once every five or six weeks	3	ASK E4
Less frequently than every six weeks	4	ASK E4
Have not received reflective supervision since joining current employer	5	ASK E4
Don't know / prefer not to say	6	ASK E6

ASK ALL ANSWERING E3 EXCEPT 'DON'T KNOW' (E3=1-5)

E4 **And in your view, is this...**

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

SHOW FOR ALL EXCEPT CODE 5 AT E3 'Have not received reflective supervision since joining current local authority: Too much	1
About right	2
Not enough	3
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	4

ASK ALL WHO HAVE RECEIVED SUPERVISION (E3=1-4)

E5 **How would you rate the quality of the reflective supervision you have received at your current employer since you joined?**

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Very good	1
Good	2
Poor	3
Very poor	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**E9 And to what extent do you agree or disagree that...**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY" (DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have the right tools (e.g. risk assessment tools, planning tools, etc.) to do my job effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have the right resources (e.g. equipment, petty cash, etc.) to do my job effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6
The IT systems and software here support me to do my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
The physical environment in my offices is appropriate for the work I do	1	2	3	4	5	6

## F Short-term career plans, barriers and enablers

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

F1 **In terms of your career plans, which ONE of the following comes closest to where you see yourself in 12 months' time?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

Working in child and family social work for a local authority – directly	1
Working in child and family social work for a local authority – via an agency	2
Working in child and family social work – in the private or voluntary sector	3
Working in social work, but outside of child and family social work	4
Working outside of social work altogether (please specify)	5
Not working at all (please specify)	6
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know/ prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

F3 **Thinking more generally, how would you rate your career progression so far?**

*IF ONLINE DISPLAY: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE*

Above my expectations	1
In line with my expectations	2
Below my expectations	3
Too early to say	4
I don't have any expectations about career progression	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don't know / prefer not to say	6

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

F4 **And in your view, what are the key factors that have helped you to progress in your child and family social work career to date?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT.. MULTICODE.*

ASK IF MULTICODE AT F4

F5 **And which ONE of these do you consider to be the main factor?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM F4 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

DS: Only show options selected at F4.

Good organisational leadership	1
Good support from managers	2
Good relationship with other colleagues	3
Amount and/ or quality of supervision	4
Opportunities for innovation	5
Availability of training / CPD opportunities	6
Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)	7
A manageable workload	8
Organisational policies such the option of flexible working and TOIL	9
Quality of initial social work training	10
Working in a single practice model	11
Ability to relocate	12
Personal determination / ambition	18
Resilience	19
Flexibility / being able to take on diverse roles	20
Other (please specify)	13
Other (please specify)	14
Other (please specify)	15
None – Nothing has helped me (SINGLE CODE ONLY)	16
Don't know / prefer not to say (SINGLE CODE ONLY)	17

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

F6 **In your view, what are the key barriers you have faced to progressing in your child and family social work career to date?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

ASK IF MULTICODE AT F6

F7 **And which ONE of these do you consider to be the main barrier?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM F6 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

DS: Please only show options selected at F6.

Poor organisational leadership	1
Poor support from managers	2
Poor relationships with other colleagues	3
Poor quality or lack of supervision	4
Lack of training / CPD opportunities	5
Too high a workload	6
Lack of organisational policies such as flexible working and TOIL	7
The quality of initial social work training	8
Working in a single practice model	9
Unable to relocate	10
Childcare responsibilities	16
Lack of clear/meaningful progression opportunities within my team/area	17
Not wanting to progress to a more senior role	18
Other (please specify)	11
Other (please specify)	12
Other (please specify)	13
None – Have not experienced any barriers (SINGLE CODE ONLY)	14
Don't know / prefer not to say (SINGLE CODE ONLY)	15

## G Job satisfaction

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

**G1 How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current job?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.*

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	IF TELE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say
The sense of achievement you get from your work	1	2	3	4	5	6
The scope for using your own initiative	1	2	3	4	5	6
The amount of influence you have over your job	1	2	3	4	5	6
The extent to which you feel challenged	1	2	3	4	5	6
The opportunity to develop your skills in your job	1	2	3	4	5	6
The amount of pay you receive	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your job security	1	2	3	4	5	6
The work itself	1	2	3	4	5	6
Public respect for the sort of work you do	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

G2 **And to what extent do you agree with the statement: “Overall, I find my current job satisfying”**

*IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE*

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: “(DO NOT READ OUT)”: Don’t know / prefer not to say	6



# H Workplace well-being

The next few questions are about wellbeing in the workplace. The research team will be analysing the data anonymously and so will not be following up individual responses.

ASK ALL STILL IN CAFSW (B1=1)

H1 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER PER ROW.

IF TELEPHONE: READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	IF TELE DISPLAY : "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say
My overall workload is too high	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I am being asked to fulfil too many different roles in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel stressed by my job	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF AGREE STRONGLY OR AGREE THAT FEEL STRESSED (H1\_3=1 or 2)

H2 **What do you feel is causing this stress?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT.*

ASK IF MULTICODE AT H2

H2a **And which of these do you feel is the ONE main thing that is causing this stress?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER*

*IF TELEPHONE:*

*PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM H2 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

DS: *Please only show options selected at H2.*

	H2	H2a
I have too much paperwork	1	1
I have too many cases	2	2
Insufficient quality of management/ support	3	3
Working culture/ practices	4	4
Having to make emotional or difficult decisions	5	5
Insufficient time for direct work with children and families	6	6
High staff turnover in my team/ area of practice	7	7
Lack of administrative/ business support	11	11
Lack of resources to support families	12	12
Other (please specify)	8	8
Nothing in particular, it is simply a stressful job	9	9
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	10	10

# I Reasons for leaving / coming back

IF ANSWERED F1=4-6: **You mentioned that in 12 months' time you think you'll be [INSERT F1 ANSWER].**

ASK ALL LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING CAFSW (B1=2/3/4 OR F1=4-6)

I1 **Why [B1=2-4: did you leave] [F1=4-6: are you considering leaving] child and family social work?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE*

ASK ALL MULTICODE AT I1

I1a **And what is your ONE main reason for [B1=2-4: leaving [F1=4-6: considering leaving] child and family social work?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I1 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

*DISPLAY ANSWERS FROM I1 (WITH DON'T KNOW)*

	I1	I2
It is just not the right type of job for me	1	1
It is not compatible with family or relationship commitments	2	2
I have found one or more of my colleagues difficult to work with	3	3
I did not/am not making the best use of the skills or experience I have	4	4
I don't like the culture of local authority social work	5	5
My fixed term contract ended/ends soon	6	6
IF F1=6: I will be retiring / retired	7	7
The amount of paperwork	8	8
The high caseload	9	9
The pay / benefits package	10	10
The working hours in general	11	11
Redundancy	12	12
Other (please specify)	13	13
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	X	X

ASK ALL STAYING IN SOCIAL WORK BUT LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING LA B2=5, 6, 7, 9

I2 **Why did you leave [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE]?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*

*IF TELEPHONE: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE*

ASK ALL MULTICODE AT I2

I2a **And what is your ONE main reason for leaving [INSERT LA FROM SAMPLE ]?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I2 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

DISPLAY ANSWERS FROM I2 (WITH DON'T KNOW)

	I2	I2a
I have found one or more of my colleagues difficult to work with	1	1
I feel I have learnt all that I can from working here	2	2
I would like to try working for a different local authority	3	3
I would like to try working for a different type of organisation altogether	4	4
I am not making the best use of the skills or experience here	5	5
I don't like the social work culture here	6	6
My fixed term contract ends soon	7	7
I am relocating	8	8
I am retired / retiring	9	9
The amount of paperwork I have to do	10	10
The high caseload	11	11
The pay / benefits package	12	12
The working hours in general	13	13
Other (please specify)	14	14
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)" Don't know / prefer not to say	X	X

ASK IF MOVED/ CONSIDERING MOVING TO A NEW SECTOR ENTIRELY (B1=3 OR F1=5)

I3 **To what extent [B1=3: do you][F1=5: do think you will] use your social work skills in the sector you [B1=3: now work in] [F1=5: the sector you think you'll move to next]?**

IF ONLINE: *Please select one response*

IF TELEPHONE: *READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE*

To a great extent	1
To some extent	2
Not very much	3
Not at all	4
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL LEFT / CONSIDERING LEAVING CAFSW (B1=2/3/4 OR F1=4-6)

- I4 **[IF LEFT B1=2/3/4: And is there anything that might encourage you to return to child and family social work in future?] [IF CONSIDERING LEAVING (F1=4-6): And is there anything that might encourage you to remain in child and family social work?]**  
*PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.*

ASK IF MULTICODE AT I4

- I4a **And which ONE of these would you say would be the main thing that might encourage you to [B1=2-4: return to] [F1=4-6: remain in] child and family social work in future?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY*

*IF TELEPHONE PROMPT WITH ANSWERS FROM I4 IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.*

Flexi-time	1
Job-sharing	2
The ability to take time off in lieu (TOIL)	3
The ability to work from home	4
A more manageable workload in terms of caseload	5
A more manageable workload in terms of administration / paperwork	6
Higher pay	7
Other financial incentives such as overtime pay	8
Subsidised childcare	9
Better/ more promotion/ career progression opportunities	10
Better/ more training opportunities	11
Better physical working environment	12
Better working culture	13
Better IT systems and software	14
Other (please specify)	15
DS EXCLUSIVE CODE: No, nothing would encourage me to return to/ stay in social work	16
Don't know / prefer not to say	17

## J Demographics

IF TELEPHONE READ OUT TO ALL, IF ONLINE DISPLAY TO ALL: **We'd like to end by asking you a few questions about yourself, to help us in our analysis.**

ASK ALL

J1 **What is your age?**

**READ OUT: Please round to the nearest whole (if required)**

Under 25 years	1
25 – 34 years	2
35 – 44 years	3
45 – 54 years	4
55 – 64 years	5
65 years and over	6
Prefer not to say	7

ASK ALL

J2 **Outside of work, do you have any care or childcare responsibilities?**

IF TELEPHONE: IF 'YES' PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES. MULTICODE OK

Yes: for school-aged child/children	1
Yes: for pre-school aged child/children	2
Yes: for child/ children with disabilities	3
Yes: caring for other family member or friends	4
No	5
Don't know / prefer not to say	6

IF ONLINE DISPLAY / IF TELEPHONE READ OUT: **The next few questions are about your gender, ethnicity and whether you have a disability or long-term health condition. You can refuse to answer any or all of these questions.**

ASK ALL

J3 **What is your gender?**

Male	1
Female	2
Other (please specify)	3
Prefer not to say	4

ASK ALL

J4 **Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know / prefer not to say	3



ASK ALL

**J5 What is your ethnic group?**

*IF ONLINE: PLEASE GIVE ONE ANSWER.*

*IF TELEPHONE SINGLE CODE. PROMPT AS NECESSARY.*

WHITE English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	1
WHITE Irish	2
WHITE Gypsy or Irish Traveller	3
WHITE Any other White background (please specify)	4
MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS White and Black Caribbean	5
MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS White and Black African	6
MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS White and Asian	7
MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background (please specify)	8
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Indian	10
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Pakistani	11
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Bangladeshi	12
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Chinese	13
Any other Asian background (please specify)	14
BLACK / AFRICAN / CARIBBEAN / BLACK BRITISH African	15
BLACK / AFRICAN / CARIBBEAN / BLACK BRITISH Caribbean	16
BLACK / AFRICAN / CARIBBEAN / BLACK BRITISH Any other Black / African / Caribbean background (please specify)	17
OTHER ETHNIC GROUP Arab	18
OTHER ETHNIC GROUP Any other ethnic group (please specify)	19
IF TELEPHONE DISPLAY: "(DO NOT READ OUT)": Don't know / Prefer not to say	20

## K Recontact

ASK ALL

- K1 **Would you be willing to take part in a follow-up survey in one year's time? This will involve doing a similar – but much shorter – survey to find out what you are doing then and whether your circumstances and views have changed.**

**ADD AS NECESSARY: Following up will help us to build a picture of what influences social worker's career experiences and decisions over time. We would still like people to take part next year even if they have left or are thinking of leaving the profession.**

Yes (am willing to be re-contacted for the follow-up survey)	1
No (am not willing to be re-contacted for the follow-up survey)	2

ASK ALL

- K2 **We will also be conducting some follow-up telephone interviews in the next couple of months which will cover these issues in more depth. The interviews will last around 45 minutes and you will be given £20 voucher as a thank you. Would you be willing to help us with this?**

Yes (can re-contact me for the qualitative research)	1
No (cannot re-contact me for the qualitative research)	2

- K3 **And would you be willing for us to contact you for quality control purposes, if we need to clarify any of the information you have given today?**

Yes	1
No	2

ASK IF AGREE TO RECONTACT AT K1 or K2 OR K3

- K4 **Thank you very much. Could we just take your name and home contact details? This will only be used to recontact you about this research, and is just in case your work details change.**

WRITE IN FIRST NAME AND SURNAME	
WRITE IN HOME EMAIL ADDRESS	
Refused	X
WRITE IN HOME TELEPHONE NUMBER (LANDLINE OR MOBILE)	

Refused	X
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**Thanks for taking part and supporting this research, we really appreciate your time.**

# Appendix 4: Guide for qualitative follow-up interviews (stayers)

DfE Longitudinal Survey of Social Workers: Qualitative Follow-up Topic guide, Year 2. STAYERS

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## A Researcher introduction

This topic guide is intended to be used in telephone interviews lasting up to 45 minutes with a range of practitioners:

10 leavers who said they would leave in Wave 1 but stayed
10 stayers who said they would stay in Wave 1 and stayed

The aims of the interviews are: 1) explore in more detail the push/pull factors influencing social worker’s career decisions, 2) explore in more detail the issues experienced by the social work profession highlighted by the survey, and suggested solutions, including demanding workload, low public respect, ineffective IT systems and dissatisfaction with workplace culture, and 3) stress factors and ideas for supporting practitioners to cope with work stress.

Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand participants’ situations as they view them. Researchers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics or experiences. Refinements may be made to the guide content, iteratively, as we conduct interviews.

Researchers will review their participant’s survey responses in advance of the interview, and tailor prompts and probes in relation to those findings.

## Participant introduction – 4-6 mins

- **Interviewer and IFF introduction / Academic institution and background:** Good morning / afternoon. My name is <NAME> and I work at IFF Research / academic institution. We have been commissioned by the Department for Education, to better understand the experiences of local authority child and family social workers in order to explore recruitment, retention and progression issues in the sector.
- As you are already aware, the interview will take around 45 minutes and we would like to thank you for taking part by offering you a £20 Amazon or Love 2 Shop voucher.

Before we begin, I just need to read out a few quick statements and gain your explicit permission to take part based on GDPR legislation.

- Firstly, you don't have to answer any of the questions. You are welcome to skip any questions or stop the interview at any point.

- **MUST READ:**

Please be assured that anything you say during the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence and results will be anonymised in any reporting so that they cannot be linked back to you.

- **MUST READ MRS Code of Conduct:**

IFF Research operates under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. Only the core members of the research team will have access to any of your details. We will not pass any of your personal details on to the Department for Education or any other companies and all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.

- **MUST READ:**

You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to [iffresearch.com/gdpr](http://iffresearch.com/gdpr). We can also email this to you if you'd like.

- **MUST READ:**

I would like to record our conversation. The recording will only be used for our analysis purposes and may be transcribed; all recordings and transcripts/notes will be stored securely and deleted after 12 months. Are you happy for me to record the conversation?

Yes	CONTINUE
No	CONTINUE Take detailed notes

Please can you confirm that you have understood the nature of the research and that you are happy to consent to taking part?

**Is that OK?**

Yes	CONTINUE
No	THANK AND CLOSE
Don't know	READ ASSURANCES

**Do you have any questions before we begin?**

## B Career plans stayers – 30 - 35 mins

### IF NOT INTERVIEWED IN W1: **Warm Up Questions**

- 1. I would like to start by asking you about your expectations of social work when you entered the profession and your experiences since.**
  - Why did you want to become a social worker?
  - How does the everyday experience of working in children's social work match your expectations?
  
- 2. I want to move on to talking about your career plans and how these have changed and developed.**
  - What was your long-term career plan when you became a social worker?
  - To what extent do you feel 'on track' in terms of your career plans?

### IF INTERVIEWED IN W1: **Interviewer to give brief account of what discussed during interview last wave.**

INTERVIEWER TO ENTER BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF W1 DISCUSSION (INCLUDE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW LONG THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE PROFESSION)

## Current Position and Short-Term Plans

- 3. When you completed the W2 survey in Autumn 2019, you told us that you were <W2 SURVEY B1 RESPONSE>. What, if anything, has changed since you completed the recent survey?**
  - New job (probe for details of new post, role, remuneration, location)
  - Changes in current job (e.g. hours, reorganisation, increase/decrease in caseload, management/team changes.)
  - Personal circumstances (e.g. moving house, sickness, caring responsibilities)
  - Further and/or additional education (e.g. related to SW or separate to)
- 4. When you completed the W1 survey in Autumn 2018, you told us that you were intending to leave/stay in your post <SEE W1 SURVEY F1 RESPONSE>. Since then, you have remained in children's social work. What factors influenced your decision?**
  - How long have you been in post (identify post title) and how long in children's social work?
  - How did you arrive there? (e.g. first post after qualifying, came from placement, promotion, move into a preferred area of practice)
  - IF MOVED LA BETWEEN WAVE 1 AND 2 <SEE LA W1/W2>: Why did you decide to move to a different LA in the last year? (e.g. LA culture, job prospects etc.)
  - IF CHANGED JOB ROLE BETWEEN WAVE 1 AND 2 <SEE B5 RESPONSE IN W1/2>: Why did you decide to change job role in the last year? (e.g. greater responsibility, financial benefits)
  - CHANGED DECISION TO STAY ONLY: What made you change your mind?
  - Was it a culmination/combination of factors or just one key event that influenced your decision to stay? Follow up with reason.
  - What aspects of the job have encouraged you to stay?
- 5. What are your career plans over the next 12 months?**
  - Do you envisage staying in children's social work (or whatever particular role they are in)? Why/ why not?
  - Do you envisage moving to a different role in social work? If so what? Eg Looked After Children (LAC); children with disabilities; adult social work; leaving a managerial role? Why?
  - Do you envisage staying in this LA/moving to another LA/ voluntary sector/ agency work/adults work? What is attractive about moving to another LA/voluntary sector/agency/adults work?
  - Are you looking for a promotion? To what role? In this LA? And if not, why not?
  - Do you envisage moving out of social work altogether? Why/why not?



## Work environment

### Working practices and environment (workloads, type of work, IT systems and processes)

**6. What was the business support like for your team? Please consider any administrative/business support staff, as well as the IT services and support staff, available to your team.**

- Do you have business support staff?
- IF HAVE BUSINESS SUPPORT STAFF: What works well in your organisation re business support?
- Are there any tasks you do that you feel business support staff could do more effectively than you? Examples.
- How helpful are IT software, systems, IT support, Laptop/iPad?
- What specific changes would you like to see? Examples of where this has made a difference

### Values of the organisation

**7. How valued do you feel by your organisation? How does your organisation demonstrate this? Can you think of ways this could be improved, or examples of where it works well?**

- Local Councillors,
- Senior management team i.e. Directorate level – e.g. DCS
- Team manager
- Wider team

### Culture (team cohesion, support, supervision)

**8. How satisfied are you with the culture in your LA? What do you mean by this?**

- How could this be improved?
- What, if any, organisational factors e.g. leadership, workload, supervision, colleagues, working conditions, would need to change in order for you to be more satisfied with the culture of LA children's social work in your LA? Examples.

**9. How would you describe your overall wellbeing as a current children's social worker?**

- Is there anything you do that helps you to improve your wellbeing?
- What, if anything, does your employer offer to support your wellbeing e.g. counselling, gym membership, support groups? Other examples or suggestions.
- Do you access any of this? Why/why not?
- IF NOT COVERED: Did you ever experience job-related stress when working in children's social work? What were your strategies to manage this?

**10. ONLY ASK IF NOT ALREADY COVERED: What keeps you in children's social work?**

- Internal factors? - Emotional ties to team, Emotional ties to the families you work with, Sense of professional identity/commitment
- External factors? – pay, security, convenience, flexible work hours etc

- Which are the most important internal and external factor for you?

**11. How do you feel the profession is regarded by the general public?**

- Why do you feel it is perceived in this way?
- IF THIS IS A NEGATIVE VIEW: what could be done to improve the way the profession is regarded?

## **Future hopes and aspirations**

**12. If there were three things that employers/DFE could change that would make you more satisfied in your work/job/ role as a social worker, what would these be?**

- Probe for how realistic these are

**Thank you very much for taking part, the information you have provided us with will be used to help understand the factors affecting the recruitment and retention of children's social workers. Findings from the study will help to guide and influence developments in national policy to address this issue.**

## Summary and wrap-up – 3-5 mins

**B1 We would like to send you a £20 voucher to say thank you for taking part. Would you prefer to receive an Amazon E-Voucher or a 'Love 2 Shop Voucher'.**

- Check what voucher type they would like.
- Ask for email / postal address so we can deliver it to them
- Explain that the processing of incentives is done through the IFF accounts team and it can take a few weeks for their vouchers to arrive. Note that the e-voucher will arrive sooner than the posted vouchers.

Amazon E Voucher (note this comes more quickly)	Email Address:
Love 2 Shop or Amazon Voucher	Postal address:

**B2 Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. Would you be willing for us to call you back if we need to clarify any information?**

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

IF CONSENT TO RECONTACT

**B3 And could I just check, is the number that I called you on today the best number to reach you?**

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No – write in number</b>	

**B4 And what is the best email address to reach you on?**

<b>Write in email address:</b>	
<b>No- refused to answer</b>	

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**IF NEEDED: You also have a right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and you can do so by calling their helpline on 0303 123 1113.**

Finally, I would just like to confirm that this interview has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct. Thank you very much for your help today.

THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE INTERVIEW

I declare that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct.		
Interviewer signature:	Date:	
Finish time:	Interview Length	Mins

## Appendix 5: Guide for qualitative follow-up interviews (leavers)

### DfE Longitudinal Survey of Social Workers: Qualitative Follow-up Topic guide, Year 2. LEAVERS

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#### A Researcher introduction

This topic guide is intended to be used in telephone interviews lasting up to 45 minutes with a range of practitioners:

10 leavers who said they would leave their job in Wave 1 and have left
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10 stayers who said they would stay in Wave 1 but have left
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The aims of the interviews are: 1) explore in more detail the push/pull factors influencing social worker's career decisions, 2) explore in more detail the issues experienced by the social work profession highlighted by the survey, and suggested solutions, including demanding workload, low public respect, ineffective IT systems and dissatisfaction with workplace culture, and 3) stress factors and ideas for supporting practitioners to cope with work stress.

Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand participants' situations as they view them. Researchers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics or experiences. Refinements may be made to the guide content, iteratively, as we conduct interviews.

Researchers will review their participant's survey responses in advance of the interview, and tailor prompts and probes in relation to those findings.

## Participant introduction – 4-6 mins

- **Interviewer and IFF introduction / Academic institution and background:** Good morning / afternoon. My name is <NAME> and I work at IFF Research / academic institution. We have been commissioned by the Department for Education, to better understand the experiences of local authority child and family social workers in order to explore recruitment, retention and progression issues in the sector.
- As you are already aware, the interview will take around 45 minutes and we would like to thank you for taking part by offering you a £20 Amazon or Love 2 Shop voucher.

Before we begin, I just need to read out a few quick statements and gain your explicit permission to take part based on GDPR legislation.

- Firstly, you don't have to answer any of the questions. You are welcome to skip any questions or stop the interview at any point.

- **MUST READ:**

Please be assured that anything you say during the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence and results will be anonymised in any reporting so that they cannot be linked back to you.

- **MUST READ MRS Code of Conduct:**

IFF Research operates under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. Only the core members of the research team will have access to any of your details. We will not pass any of your personal details on to the Department for Education or any other companies and all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.

- **MUST READ:**

You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to [iffresearch.com/gdpr](http://iffresearch.com/gdpr). We can also email this to you if you'd like.

- **MUST READ:**

I would like to record our conversation. The recording will only be used for our analysis purposes and may be transcribed; all recordings and transcripts/notes will be stored securely and deleted after 12 months. Are you happy for me to record the conversation?

Yes	CONTINUE
No	CONTINUE Take detailed notes

Please can you confirm that you have understood the nature of the research and that you are happy to consent to taking part?

**Is that OK?**

Yes	CONTINUE
No	THANK AND CLOSE
Don't know	READ ASSURANCES

**Do you have any questions before we begin?**

## B Career plans leavers – 30 - 35 mins

### IF NOT INTERVIEWED IN W1: **Warm Up Questions**

- 1. I would like to start by asking you about your expectations of social work when you entered the profession and your experiences since.**
  - Why did you want to become a social worker?
  - How did the everyday experience of working in children's social work match your expectations?
- 2. I want to move on to talking about your career plans and how these have changed and developed.**
  - What was your long-term career plan when you became a social worker?
  - To what extent do you feel 'on track' in terms of your career plans?

### IF INTERVIEWED IN W1: **Interviewer to give brief account of what discussed during interview last wave.**

INTERVIEWER TO ENTER BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF W1 DISCUSSION (INCLUDE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW LONG THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE PROFESSION)



## Current Position and Short-Term Plans

- 3. When you completed the W2 survey in Autumn 2019, you told us that you were <W2 SURVEY B1 RESPONSE>. What, if anything, has changed since you completed the survey?**
  - New job (probe for details of new post, role, remuneration, location)
  - Changes in current job (e.g. hours, reorganisation, increase/decrease in caseload, management/team changes)
  - Personal circumstances (e.g. moving house, sickness, caring responsibilities)
  - Further and/or additional education (e.g. related to SW or separate to)
- 4. When you completed the W1 survey in Autumn 2018, you told us that you were intending to leave/stay in your post <SEE W1 SURVEY F1 RESPONSE>. Since then, you have left children's social work. What factors influenced that intention/decision?**
  - How long had you been in post (identify post title), and how long in children's social work?
  - How did you arrive there? (e.g. first post after qualifying, came from placement, promotion, move into a preferred area of practice)
  - CHANGED DECISION TO LEAVE ONLY: What made you change your mind?
  - ALL LEAVERS: Was it a culmination/combination of factors or just one key event that influenced your decision to leave? Follow-up with reason ('carrot' or 'stick' i.e. push or pull).
  - Have any of your colleagues experienced similar issues? Examples
  - Is there anything your employer could have done that would have made you decide to stay?
- 5. What are your career plans over the next 12 months?**
  - Do you envisage returning to children's social work? Why/ why not?
  - IF RETURNING: Do you envisage moving to a different role in social work/another LA/ voluntary sector/ agency work/ adults work?
  - IF RETURNING TO A DIFFERENT ROLE IN SOCIAL WORK: What is it about other LAs /voluntary sector/agency/adults work that is attractive to you?
  - IF STAYING OUT OF SOCIAL WORK: Do you envisage staying out of social work altogether? Why/why not?
  - IF STAYING OUT OF SOCIAL WORK: What will you do?

## Work environment

### Working practices and environment (workloads, type of work, IT systems and processes)

- 6. When you worked in children's social work, what was the business support like for your team? Please consider any administrative/business support staff, as well as the IT services and support staff, available to your team.**
  - Did you have business support staff?

- IF HAVE BUSINESS SUPPORT STAFF: What worked well in your organisation re. business support?
- Are there any tasks you did that you felt business support staff could do more effectively than you? Examples.
- How helpful were IT software, systems, IT support, Laptop/iPad?
- What specific changes would you have liked to see? Examples of where this had made a difference.
- How does the business support in your current post compare to when you were in children's social work?

#### Values of the organisation

**7. When you worked in children's social work, how valued did you feel by your organisation? How did your organisation demonstrate this? Can you think of ways this could have been improved, or examples of where it works well?**

- Local councillors
- Senior management team i.e. Directorate level e.g. DCS
- Team manager
- Wider team

#### Culture (team cohesion, support, supervision)

**8. How satisfied were you with the culture in your LA? What do you mean by this?**

- How, if at all, could this have been improved?
- What, if any, organisational factors e.g. leadership, workload, supervision, colleagues, working conditions, stress management, car parking, would need to have changed in order for you to be more satisfied with the culture of children's social work in your LA? Examples.

**9. How would you describe your overall wellbeing when you worked in children's social work?**

- Is there anything you did that helped you to improve your well-being? What could your employer have done to support this? Examples.
- What, if anything, did your employer offer to support your wellbeing e.g. counselling, gym membership, support groups?
- Did you access any of this? Why/why not?
- IF NOT COVERED: Did you ever experience job-related stress when working in children's social work? What were your strategies to manage this?
- How, if at all, has your wellbeing changed since leaving children's social work? How?

**10. ONLY ASK IF NOT ALREADY COVERED: Can you think of anything that might have helped to keep you in children's social work?**

- Internal factors? – Emotional ties to team, Emotional ties to the families you work with, Sense of professional identity/commitment
- External factors? – pay, security, convenience, flexible work hours etc

- Which were the most important internal and external factor for you?

**11. How do you feel the children's social work profession is regarded by the general public?**

- Why do you feel it is perceived in this way?
- IF THIS IS A NEGATIVE VIEW: what could be done to improve the way the profession is regarded?

**Future hopes and aspirations**

**12. If there were three things that employers/DFE you could change that would make you want to return as a children's social worker, what would these be?**

- Probe for how realistic these are

**Thank you very much for taking part, the information you have provided us with will be used to help understand the factors affecting the recruitment and retention of children's social workers. Findings from the study will help to guide and influence developments in national policy to address this issue.**

## Summary and wrap-up – 3-5 mins

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Amazon E Voucher (note this comes more quickly)	Email Address:
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<b>Yes</b>	
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<b>Write in email address:</b>	
<b>No- refused to answer</b>	

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Interviewer signature:	Date:	
Finish time:	Interview Length	Mins

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